

THE
BELL FOUNDRY
OTTO VON SCHACHING



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THE BELL FOUNDRY



"The condemned man then knelt, and suddenly the brazen voice of the last bell he had cast came floating from the church tower of Mils."—(Page 169.)

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BY

OTTO VON SCHACHING

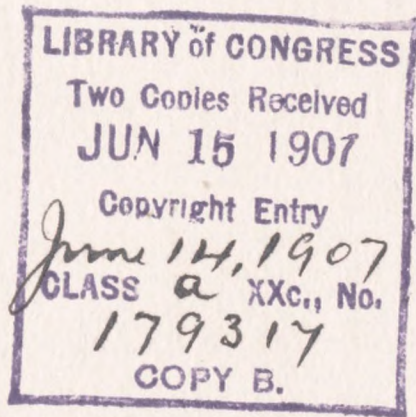
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THE BELL FOUNDRY

CHAPTER I

GEROLD ACCEPTS AN INVITATION

In the afternoon of a June day in the year of Our Lord 1622, a fresh, vigorous young man entered the Black Bear Inn at Hall, a noted bathing resort close to the city of Inn. His eyes, which were blue, had an open, honest expression. His countenance was handsome and the features regular and well molded. The head was covered with a heavy growth of light brown hair and a mustache added completeness to his look of manly courage and intelligence.

With a courteous "God bless you all," the stranger entered the reception-room and

modestly sought a place near the window where he laid aside his pack and placed a knotted walking-stick across the bench on which he seated himself.

"A measure of your best red," was his order to the host, a short little man with a rotundity that gave evidence of a good appetite and generous living.

At another table sat three or four guests. They may have been honest residents of the town. The young man scanned them hastily. His interest was aroused by a broad-shouldered man who sat directly opposite. There was something unusual in his browned countenance which was nearly covered with a heavy, black beard. It wore an expression of unalterable determination and daring. At one time the eyes would assume a look of gentleness and at another they would flash like glowing coals.

"May God bless it for you," said the host, as he placed the wine measure in front of his guest, who immediately raised it to

his lips and took a long swallow of the contents.

“You have traveled a long distance to-day?” inquired the host curiously.

“From Innsbruck,” was the reply. “I really came from the South, where I worked in Venice, but I am now on my way to Bavaria, my home.”

“Yes!” exclaimed the landlord, nodding his head contentedly. “And what do you work at, may I ask?”

The young man laughed roguishly, and said, “I will give you a riddle to solve which will make known my business. There is a dough that no one eats — it is baptized and yet is not a Christian, it never thinks of stealing and yet is hung. Now, Mr. Landlord, what is it?”

The latter put the wet index finger of his right hand against his glowing red nose to invoke his wits for the solution of the puzzle. “I have it,” he cried in exultation, “the dough is molten metal and what

is baptized and hung is the bell. Therefore you are a bell founder."

"Correct," replied the stranger, clapping his hands approvingly.

The broad-shouldered guest who had attracted the young traveler's attention was at his side in an instant.

"God bless the business," he ejaculated, as he offered his large, heavy hand to the stranger. "I belong to the craft, too."

The young man gazed at the speaker, somewhat surprised, but answered the greeting by word and handshake.

"Have you never heard of our brave, skillful founder, young man?" inquired the landlord, as he pointed backward with his thumb to the newcomer, calling him by name.

"Why, certainly," exclaimed the young man, as his countenance beamed with pleasure. "Your name, sir, sounds as well as your bells, which are heard through the length and breadth of Tyrol."

This was no flattery. John Gatterer was a famous master in the art of bell founding and his praise was sounded by many brazen tongues from the towers of Tyrol.

Gatterer grinned. Then he let his eyes flash fully upon the young fellow workman.

"What is your name, if a question is permissible?" inquired Gatterer, without removing his eyes.

"Call me Gerold Roemer."

"You are from Bavaria," continued Gatterer, "as I have heard you say, and you are returning home. Now, listen, don't you want to take a look at the foundry on your way home? You will like it there, and if so, you can become my partner. I need a good one. Where did you work last?"

Gerold mentioned the names of several German and Italian bell-founders and the explanation made a favorable impression.

"Now what do you think of my proposal, partner?" urged Gatterer.

Gerold shrugged his shoulders, undecided. He felt flattered by the invitation of the famous mechanic, but his feelings were checked by other thoughts.

“It would be an honor for me, master,” replied Gerold, gazing openly into the other’s face; “but I have a dear little old mother at home whom I have not seen for many years; and with old people — you know, yourself, master — ”

“Yes, yes. I understand you,” interrupted Gatterer; “old people sometimes go quickly, you wanted to say. Now, your mother is not dead yet and she will live a while longer. You can put in a couple of hours with me. We will be at the foundry in an hour. You can examine the situation carefully and if you don’t want to remain, then, in God’s name, you will know in the morning what road to take on your homeward journey. You can certainly sleep one night under my roof.”

Gatterer had spoken in such insinuating

tones that Gerold Roemer, after brief consideration, promised to visit the foundry. This was a short hour's walk from the city and Gatterer described the road.

"Unfortunately," he said, "I am unable to accompany you. I have several matters to attend to here in the city and won't be able to get home before evening. But, you can take my greetings to my wife."

Gerold expressed his thanks for the compliment.

"And now take your glass and sit with us. There is more to talk about with these worthy citizens, and you may tell us of your wonderings and sojourn in the South and elsewhere."

Roemer immediately acted on the suggestion and took a seat beside Gatterer with the other guests who had listened carefully to the conversation between the two. The news of the day and Gerold's wanderings called forth unrestrained gossip in which all took part. Gerold had a good account to

give of everything; he was a fluent talker and a good story-teller. This, added to his pleasant manner and prepossessing appearance, caused him to grow in favor with his listeners and especially with Gatterer, who determined to prevent him from carrying out his plan to return to Bavaria.

The time passed rapidly. Gerold took out a leather pocketbook from which he removed a coin which he placed on the table to pay for the refreshments. This Gatterer would not permit. "No, you won't," he exclaimed, "You are my guest and fellow-craftsman. Do me the favor to let me attend to the reckoning."

"God be praised," said Roemer, putting back the coin. He then emptied his glass to his host's health, to their honorable calling and to the prosperity of the city. Then rising from his seat he bade adieu to all and took his departure.

"Till to-night at the foundry!" shouted Gatterer after the departing guest. "You

cannot possibly miss the road." Then Gerold moved on.

Soon the grey old city with its turreted walls lay behind him. He crossed the wooden bridge of Inn. In front rolled hills covered with timber known as the middle range of mountains. To the left rose the high peak of the Salzberg mountain; to the right lay Gilfertsberg, shimmering in the sunshine. The sun was at its zenith and the trees, which covered the beautiful valley, gave forth a fragrant odor.

Gerold's face was covered with perspiration, he was, therefore, pleased when he reached the high ground that stretches from Hall to the middle range. Over and through this territory extends the highway, which then presented a very animated appearance. Goods were being transported from Italy to Germany through the Tyrol. These were carried by ox teams across the bridge, and some taken by water from Hall, others went by way of Innsbruck to Augs-

burg and still others were conveyed to Munich, in Bavaria. Traffic and travel at this time was exceedingly brisk. A sumpter train heavily laden approached Gerold. The drivers were armed to the teeth, for at that time the region in the vicinity of Hall, like many other districts of Germany, did not enjoy a very enviable reputation. The Thirty Years' War had spread terror everywhere and had let loose packs of human wolves that respected neither life nor property. Highwaymen, discharged soldiers or deserters turned their weapons against peaceable citizens and peasants, robbing travelers on the highways and carrying off the wares they were conveying.

The drivers and servants were again out of Gerold's sight and on he went, alone. The heat was now succeeded by a cooling breeze, which the traveler allowed to fan his perspiring brow, by removing his cap. It seemed to him that he had been an hour on the road already, but there was yet no

sign of human habitation, or of the foundry which Gatterer had described.

“Confound it!” he exclaimed. “Can I have lost my way?” He gazed around thoughtfully. “Before me is the road and nothing but timber on every side.” He looked to the west, and in the sky, like a crouching beast making ready for a spring, he discovered a huge, grey cloud and realized that a terrible storm was impending.

“Praised be Jesus Christ!” suddenly exclaimed some one at his heels.

A man in peasant’s garb stood by him.

“For ever and ever. Amen,” replied Gerold in accordance with the custom of Catholic countries in those days.

“Where are you going?” inquired the peasant.

“To the bell foundry,” answered Gerold. “But I fear I am not on the right road.”

“Come with me a bit,” replied the old man. “I will show you the way.” Gerold readily assented.

“We are going to have a storm,” continued the peasant, “before we can say twenty *Pater Nosters*,” as he looked towards the west. “The wind blows from Bavaria. Last year our master gazed towards Bavaria on Easter day and the worst storms come from the direction in which he looks, the following year.”

A martin jumped out of a thicket to their left. “Look, there is a poor soul,” exclaimed the old man loquaciously. “He has evidently been here some time. This is a dreadful place. I dare not remain long with you for the fiery sprite is out to-night. He is the worst of the bad spirits. If one of them approaches you, young man, make the sign of the cross on yourself quickly and say a prayer. Then the devil will scamper off to join his companions.”

The old man, trembling with fear of the hobgoblin of the locality, made the sign of the cross on himself three times; for the blood-red martin is the most alarming and

prayer-provoking sprite known in the mountains or valleys of the Tyrol. A rumbling sound was heard in the west. There the cloud-monster had become ink-black. The wind blew fiercely and lifted the dust from the road in blinding volume.

"We are going to have a rough time," suggested Gerold. "Have we far to go?"

"A good hour's walk," replied the peasant. "But not far from here is a hazel tree and I will take shelter there till the storm blows over. It is easy to see that the witches have caused the storm; the wind shows that. But no lightning can strike the hazel tree for it has been specially consecrated since the Mother of God stood under one, when here in our country, to seek shelter from a storm."

A dark pine tree was now in sight. Covered with moss it quaked under the raging storm and its plaintive groaning resounded through the forest.

The peasant halted and pointed to a

track, over which wheels had passed, that led directly into the woods.

“Follow that track,” counselled the old man, “and you will soon reach the foundry. God protect you.”

“God grant it,” replied Gerold, as he bent his steps through the brushwood.

The road he had taken led him deeper into the forest. As night began to fall a strange feeling took possession of the traveler. It was not fear, to which he was a stranger, but a peculiar, uncomfortable sensation which he had never before experienced.

Suddenly a flash of lightning lit up the awful darkness and was followed by a deafening peal of thunder which seemed to shake heaven and earth. The storm-giant was seeking to shake loose his chains. Rain poured down from the dark, swollen clouds, the storm howled through the forest; one flash of lightning succeeded another, clash followed clash of thunder until the earth

seemed to heave and the surrounding mountains were shaken to their foundations.

Gerold could not remember having been in such a storm before, still he did not wish to seek shelter beneath the trees for he hoped soon to reach the foundry.

Another blinding lightning flash that lit up the surroundings and Gerold beheld with joy the sought-for haven of rest. It was a medium sized building which revealed to the experienced eye the purpose for which it was constructed. It was only a few hundred paces distant from the forest, the gloom of which intensified the silent darkness of Gatterer's foundry and so shrouded the clearing that it inspired the traveler with awe and increased his feeling of unrest.

CHAPTER II

THE BELL FOUNDRY

As Gerold Roemer entered the house he saw two women kneeling in prayer before a crucifix attached to the wall. A tallow candle sizzled on the table. The roar of the storm drowned the voices of the women who prayed aloud so that the stranger's presence passed unnoticed till one of the women by accident, or attracted by a slight noise, lifted her face from her hands and glanced behind her. She was a young girl of about eighteen. With a rapid movement and a slight exclamation of surprise she averted her face and it seemed to the young man that she whispered to her companion: "Mother, there is a strange man in the room."

The latter would not be interrupted and completed her devotions, then the two women rose from their knees.

“God bless you, virtuous and honest woman, and your devout occupation,” began Gerold, and then explained the reasons for his presence. The mother bade him welcome, for she was a kind-hearted woman who delighted in showing her hospitality to visitors.

“Elizabeth,” she instructed the daughter, bring some wine and whatever else is needed for the refreshment of your father’s guest. You are wet through,” she said to Gerold, “and need some dry clothes.”

“Thank God, landlady,” was the quick reply of the visitor; “don’t put yourself to any extra trouble. I have fared pretty well in getting here and have not been wet very long. Besides, I have clean linen and other clothes in my bundle.”

“Give me your bundle,” replied the woman, “and I will stow it away till you

are ready to go. To-morrow morning will be soon enough for that."

She caught up Gerold's pack and took it to an adjoining room, returning immediately. Elizabeth appeared with a jug of wine, some bread and cheese and smoked meat to which Gerold helped himself without being urged. Seated at the table he ate and drank with an excellent appetite, due principally to the pleasant chatter of the hospitable landlady. The latter knew how to ask many questions concerning Gerold's home, his parents, his travels, and his good and ill luck in the South, the Tyrol and elsewhere. To all these questions the young Bavarian replied in an interesting manner and in the best of humor, so that his listeners soon forgot all about the storm that raged out of doors. Even the elderly maid servant, who had previously joined in prayer and was now crouched near the warm fire with her head sunk between her hands and shoulders, frequently forgot her sign of the cross as a

protection against the thunder and lightning.

“Are none of your people at home?” inquired Gerold curiously; for it seemed strange to him that no man should be around to protect the women. “I supposed at first,” he continued, “that they had been driven to the house by the storm and were united in prayer, as is the custom on such occasions in all Catholic countries.”

His words seemed to cause a shadow of displeasure to pass across the landlady's face and he almost regretted having asked the question. “Yes, indeed,” answered the woman, “the workmen are all at home; but when you talk of prayer you are mistaken. Some of them are very curious men, and many of them — God forgive me for saying so — are too wicked to be in hell. But it is hard to find good workmen. The unfortunate war and the land failures have spoiled our best citizens so that now if a workman only understands his business no

questions are asked and no other conditions are imposed." Here the pious woman heaved a deep sigh. At this time one of Gatterer's partners appeared. A leather apron covered his front to below his knees and the sleeves were rolled above the elbows. His face, which was not that of a youth, was covered with a red beard and on the left cheek was a deep, red scar.

"Isn't the master home yet?" he inquired in a rough voice.

He suddenly discovered the visitor.

"No, Hans," replied Margaret, Gatterer's wife. "He will not be here before evening. That is the message he sent by our guest over there."

"Ha, ha! One of our craft, assuredly," exclaimed the workman with a pleased grin as he approached Gerold. "Come," he said, taking him familiarly by the arm as if he had known him seven years: "it is customary at the foundry — and God bless him who introduced the custom — that every

newcomer belonging to the craft should treat to a jug of wine."

"If that is so," replied Gerold, "I will not be an exception," and he took a coin out of his pocketbook. "There, let you and your partners drink all you want. I have had enough already."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Hans with a loud laugh, as he pocketed the piece of silver, "then we can fill our throats the better. You know the old song, brother Bavarian:

'A farmer lad and a wallowing hog
Should always fat and full be;
For neither one nor the other knows
How soon he may turn up his toes.'

"You know, also, brother, that the bell-cast is a sour commodity that makes one very thirsty and the thirst—yes, that is my failing. I tumbled into our village stream when I was a mere lad—I come from German-Bohemia—and the water

had risen to a flood. I must have been there a quarter of an hour before I was fished out. Every one thought I was dead, but I — ha, ha! I was born on the first of April, the birthday of bloody Judas, and those born on that day are not supposed to live long and to die a rogue's death. My bath did me no harm, but since then I have suffered from thirst. Two years ago I rode to Prague and a cursed Bohemian slashed me with his sword across the face. The wound burned and I fell from my horse, thinking the black angel would have a good roast for his spit. But I was either too wicked for hell or too good for heaven — in short, I am still here. I have been a soldier, too, but I prefer casting bells to having my skull cracked. Now, you know my record, brother."

Gerold had found some diversion in the long-winded tale of the ex-soldier but not so Margaret. She had heard the same story many times, as he only wanted a

listener to recite it. It was his hobby to make known his life's history to every newcomer.

"Are you through with your old yarn, Hans?" inquired Mrs. Gatterer wearily.

"Well, well, do you think I should make no return for the wine. I am a decent fellow, with your permission."

"It is the master's wish that our guest should see the foundry," remarked Margaret. "Show him the castings, also, Hans."

The workman peeped through the window to examine the weather. It rained only a little less than before and the thunder continued to rattle. The black sky was as forbidding as ever.

"If you wish, brother," he said to Gerold, "we will go."

Gerold nodded assent and rose to follow his guide. Both crossed the square courtyard. A shrill cry came from a distance.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed Hans. "I know

that song bird. It is only Gatterer that warbles so."

He was right. At the foundry entrance stood the big, broad form of the master, much to Gerold's surprise, who supposed him to be still at Hall.

"Come here, Hans," ordered Gatterer. The workman responded promptly, while Gerold, standing in the middle of the courtyard observed how, after Gatterer had exchanged a few words with Hans, the latter disappeared.

"How did you get along on the road?" inquired Gatterer, as he approached Gerold.

"The storm drowned me," replied the latter. "I am surprised to see you back so soon, master," he continued, "I did not expect to see you before evening."

Gatterer laughed and said: "You need not be surprised, I left soon after you and by a short cut. I could not remain behind very long as I must leave again immediately with some of my associates."

“What! You must leave to-day?” exclaimed Gerold, “To-day will soon be ended.”

“That makes no difference. We must have a bell at Sterzing early to-morrow. I learned accidentally in Hall that there would be a team going that way, and I said to myself ‘Opportunity makes the thief’—so we will go. Do you know that the highways are very unsafe because of the travel and the heavy rain?”

Gerold praised Gatterer’s foresight. He would not act otherwise under similar circumstances.

“And now I have an important communication to make to you,” said Gatterer, in an earnest tone.

“To me!” exclaimed Gerold, in surprise, “What may it be, master?”

“Well, I have been in the world and have learned to read faces as if they were printed books. Yours pleases me and I must be badly mistaken if you are not an excep-

tionally good fellow who understands his business thoroughly."

"Listen, master," answered Gerold, "I do not like your praise, you do not know me very intimately and appearances have deceived more than you."

"Because you speak in that manner," retorted Gatterer, "I am obliged to form a still better opinion of you. It is true I do not know you well but our acquaintance will teach me more. Besides, you must have recommendations from those with whom you have worked elsewhere."

"Certainly," interrupted Gerold hastily, "Let me show them to you." And he turned to the house where he had his papers stowed away in his pack.

Gatterer held him back. "It is not necessary," he exclaimed; "your honest face and the names of those with whom you have worked in Germany and the South are sufficient to beget my confidence. Now, listen. I must go on a journey with some of my

workmen, as I have already told you. A bell has been ordered for the Capuchin monastery at Hall which the fathers need at once and insist on having in the belfry this week. You can do me a great favor by attending to the casting during my absence. I will not, probably, return from Sterzing in less than two days and the bell should be cast in the mean time."

"But you certainly have other workmen to whom you can entrust the casting, master?" answered Gerold, modestly.

Gatterer shook his head.

"I carry the best of them with me to Sterzing," he explained, "and I would not trust those I leave behind. Do not wait to consider the matter but promise me your assistance."

Gerold thought a while and then said, "In the name of God, master, I will do as you wish. You do me a great honor and I will show you that I am not undeserving of it."

Gatterer was greatly pleased and invited the stranger to accompany him to the foundry. In front of the shops stood a wagon which Gatterer had borrowed from a neighboring peasant and in this half a dozen workmen were loading a bell. Gatterer gave some instructions, introduced Gerold as an honorable workman and both then entered the foundry. Here Gerold saw the preparations that had been made for casting the bell. The mould, composed of sand, earth and ashes, was ready and the molten metal was in the furnace.

“The cast can be made in six hours,” explained Gatterer. “The metal has been three hours in the melting pot.”

While inspecting the foundry Gerold's remarks about bell-casting in general and his criticism of the machinery and appliances gave Gatterer to understand that he was a very skilful workman.

Meanwhile the bell had been placed upon the wagon by the workmen. Gatterer went

to his house, informed his wife of the journey he had to make and made the necessary preparations.

Half an hour later the heavy wagon, drawn by three horses, left the courtyard. It was followed by Gatterer and five workmen. All were armed, some with one and others with a different kind of weapon. This was not unnecessary, as the road to Sterzing was beset with dangers.

CHAPTER III

AN ENCOUNTER WITH HANS

Gerold found himself alone in the foundry. True, Gatterer had left three workmen behind, but scarcely had he turned his back when these, instead of helping with the cast, left the building without saying where they were going or when they were coming back.

Gerold received the impression that they were not favorably disposed toward him. He could not understand the situation. The others must have felt injured by the master's action, for they let it be seen that they did not appreciate the confidence that had been placed in the stranger from Bavaria.

Gerold almost repented that he had allowed Gatterer to make him stay. The impression produced on him by the surround-

ings strengthened him in this feeling. Whichever way he turned he encountered an unfriendly glare and the gloom of the forest in the near distance only increased his feelings of uneasiness. He was only sustained by the consciousness that his position in the foundry was not merely that of a guest but of one in whom special confidence had been placed. He resolved to respond to this confidence by displaying all the skill of which he was capable in the execution of his work and thus provide a memento of his presence at the foundry.

Gerold remembered that it was his duty to make himself known in his new capacity to Gatterer's wife who, although she undoubtedly was aware of her husband's arrangements, would be glad to receive a call from a new workman.

Before leaving he made several turns around the furnace to convince himself that everything was right with the metal to be cast. He felt assured that nothing was

wrong and he started for the dwelling. There the mistress greeted him cordially, and expressed her satisfaction that he had been persuaded to remain and do so great a favor for her husband.

"The master will pay you well for it," she finally said. "Be assured that he has no small confidence in you. No stranger has ever yet appeared in whom he has displayed the same amount of interest. Don't you want to remain with us?"

"I cannot give you a positive answer yet," returned Gerold. "First of all I must go to see my poor old mother. I have already told you that. It may be that I might return later. As the old saying is, 'there is wisdom in waiting.'"

"You are quite right, Gerold," praised the mistress.

After a few words more, the stranger returned to the foundry where he hoped to find the three workmen; but none of them was in sight. There was no longer any

doubt that they avoided him designedly, and, perhaps, for a sinister purpose.

He meditated over what was to be done. One thing was certain; he was going to perform his task and fulfil his duty regardless of every opposition. He would act towards his associates in a friendly way and maybe thus overcome their prejudices, but in no event should they intimidate or frighten him. His thoughts were specially directed to the red bearded Hans, the rough ex-soldier, who, he felt, would shrink at nothing.

With such feelings Gerold approached an anvil close to the furnace. He stuck his hands in a pocket of his blouse and pulled out his beads on which he began to count his prayers. The beads were a present from his old mother five years before, when he left home. During that time they had always been in his possession and often, in moments of affliction and distress, had been for him a source of comfort and consolation. Never had the brown beads slipped

through his fingers in trustful prayer that his heavenly mother had not answered his appeal.

While Gerold busied himself with his devotions his three associates were otherwise engaged. They had gone to a retired spot in the neighboring forest to hold a consultation as to how they should act towards the intruder, for as such they regarded the stranger from Bavaria. Hans was the leader and was more incensed because he was not asked to join Gatterer on his journey to Sterzing than because he saw Gerold receive greater recognition than himself. He wished to vent his anger and disappointment on the stranger.

“Now,” he said to his two companions, “I will not allow the master to place a tramp over us. We understand our business as well as any one of our trade. I propose that we refuse to help him in any way. Then we will see how he will make the cast.”

"I would rather give him a punch behind the ear that would throw him to the ground and make him forget the business," exclaimed one of the others with forbidding countenance and eyes that glistened like those of a cat. "Do so, Wolf," exclaimed Hans in a wicked, encouraging tone. "What will it amount to? You need not knock him stone cold; a little crack on the skull wouldn't hurt him."

"Is that so?" replied Wolf, with a sneer. "How clever you are, Hans! I should fling myself into the water while you remain on dry land to see me drown. When the neck is in danger you take good care to crack no skulls."

"Wolf is right," interposed another. "We must not use force. The best is not to bother about him."

"What!" roared Hans wildly. "We will see whether we bother ourselves about him or not. You are a pair of old hags who work with your jaws and haven't a bit of

courage. I'll show you how to deal with the interloper."

The discussion was neither successful nor peaceful. Hans would have excited his companions to violence, but found to his annoyance that they would not be easily led. He, therefore, determined all the more to attend to the business himself.

They left the forest and returned to the foundry where they found Gerold seated on the anvil reciting his beads. Hans burst into a loud laugh in which the others joined.

Gerold continued his prayers without seeming to take notice of the malicious demonstration.

"The Bavarians are very pious people," exclaimed Hans, in ridicule. "There he sits like a woodchopper and mumbles his rosary like an old woman. Say, partner, did the master put you here to work or to pray?"

"Let me alone," answered Gerold, in a decisive though not unfriendly tone, and

he continued his devotions without taking any notice of the ridicule heaped upon him by his companions, who stood at a distance and, by word and action, sought to provoke him to anger. Suddenly Hans broke out in blasphemous language.

Gerold sprang from his seat and rushed to the blasphemer.

“By what right do you three dare to insult me?” he shouted in anger. “And you, Hans, how dare you outrage the good God? Once more I tell you to let me alone or —”

“Take your rosary and get out of here,” cried Hans sharply. “We do not need any praying brothers in the foundry. We can cast bells better without than with you.”

“Ha, ha! Does the wind blow from that direction!” thought Gerold as he cast a contemptuous glance at Hans.

“Why did you not complain to the boss if my presence didn’t suit you? Mr. Gatterer gave me this job, and I did not ask

him for it. Had I known what kind of associates I would have to deal with I would now be many miles away from here. I am here now, however, and propose to do my work, in which you, like honorable associates, will help me."

The three shrieked at Gerold in the most abusive manner and told him that they would not turn a finger for him as long as he remained in the foundry.

Hans shouted the loudest and became purple with rage.

Gerold gazed at Hans in astonishment and quietly turned his back upon the three, in order to examine the flux which was seething and sizzling in the furnace.

Scarcely had he done so when the furious Hans hit him a blow on the back of the head that caused him to fall in a heap and almost lose consciousness. He recovered quickly and turned on his treacherous enemy.

Hans stood in front of him. His glance

was that of a would-be murderer. His fists were closed and he acted as if he wished to renew the attack. Gerold, noticing his attitude, picked up an iron bar that leaned against the furnace.

“Keep away, you infamous scoundrel,” he exclaimed, “or, so sure as God made me, I will teach you a bitter lesson.” But Hans, who seemed to have gone crazy with anger, rushed upon the Bavarian with head and shoulders bent, intending to deal him a still heavier blow. Thus forced, Gerold swung the heavy iron bar. A dull cry escaped Hans’ lips and he fell, apparently lifeless, to the floor, with blood streaming from a gaping wound in his head. Gerold, stunned by what had occurred, gazed on the victim of his violence. It was the first time in his life that he had shed human blood; but he had been compelled by a dreadful necessity and was not troubled with any remorse.

“You are witnesses,” he said to the

workmen, "that I am not to blame. I did not begin the quarrel and was justified in protecting myself from a treacherous enemy."

"You have killed him," said Wolf; "he will never move again."

"Come here and help me to raise him," commanded Gerold. Both approached without objection. The courageous conduct of the stranger had inspired them with respect and made them less defiant.

The wounded man was conveyed to the dwelling house. Gatterer's wife was astonished at the turn affairs had taken. She berated Wolf and his companion roundly and threatened them with her husband's wrath.

Hans' condition was not alarming. He soon recovered consciousness, and when his wounds had been washed and bandaged he was put to bed and turned over to the care of Ursula, the housemaid.

Gerold returned to the foundry, followed

by the two workmen who, however, exchanged no words with the newcomer, although they complied with his instructions and apparently forgot their former resolutions and threats.

Finally the moment for the casting arrived. Night had set in and the place was lighted by two huge, resinous torches. Before Gerold would make the casting he recited another *Our Father*, and the workmen removed the stop of the smelting pot. The liquid metal gushed forth with a roar and was carefully conveyed to the mould, into which it was poured.

“Praised be God and his holy mother!” ejaculated Gerold. “Everything is all right so far.”

It was late that night when he retired to bed after eating a lunch which Mrs. Gatterer had prepared for him. He slept peacefully the whole night, as those do whose good heart and clear conscience give them assurance of God’s protection.

CHAPTER IV

A MESSENGER FROM ROME

Gatterer arrived without accident at Sterzing, the end of his journey. When he and his companions had rested a little while, the bell was conveyed to the parish church for which it had been cast. It was soon located in the tower and its brazen voice caused the citizens to gather around. Gatterer was pleased with his work and received unstinted praise from the people. A crowd stood in front while the bell was being hung, drawn thither by curiosity. Suddenly attention was attracted by a heavy vehicle drawn by four mules and escorted by an armed guard. The coach, for such it was, was driven past the crowd and stopped in front of the most prominent inn. Its doors were flung open and a distin-

guished Italian nobleman alighted, followed by a lady of mature years and a beautiful young girl. It was easy to see from the care bestowed on them that one was the wife and the other the daughter of the nobleman. They conversed together in Italian, their native tongue.

The coach rolled through the gateway leading to the courtyard and the dust-covered animals were turned over to the servants.

Traveling was not then what it is at present, and the arrival of the strangers aroused the curiosity of the natives, particularly because of their distinguished appearance and escort. It was not long before the crowd learned the name of the noble family and the object of their visit. They had traveled from Rome and were on their way to Hall by way of the bridge.

The situation was just this: the distinguished nobleman was a delegate of Pope Gregory XV and had been commissioned to

visit St. George's Benedictine Abbey in Suabia, where a remarkable Austrian prisoner of state, Cardinal Klesel, was confined.

Melchior Klesel, the son of a Protestant baker of Vienna, had become a Catholic at the age of sixteen; studied with the Jesuits at the high school of Ingoldstadt, and was ordained priest after filling many important ecclesiastical positions. In 1598 he was made bishop of Vienna and was promoted to the cardinalate in 1615. As chancellor of the emperor Matthew, he had rendered great service through the restoration of ecclesiastical trials and punishments in Austria, and for a time was regarded as the most bitter antagonist of the Protestants. He was led by political considerations, however, to gradually modify his methods and when, in 1618, the question arose whether the demands of the Bohemians should be acceded to or should they be put to the sword, he declared in favor of

peace. This reduced his influence with the Catholics, and especially with the strong Catholic counts, Ferdinand and Maximilian, to such an extent that they first, in July, 1618, caused him to be imprisoned in a castle named Ambras and had him conveyed in the following year as a prisoner of state to the abbacy already mentioned. This outrage was strenuously condemned at Rome; appeals were made to the emperor, and the Pope tried to put himself in communication with the imprisoned cardinal, to whom he sent messengers several times. Such a messenger was now on the road and had arrived at Sterzing. His name was Antonio Mazzini, and he was a rich marquis from the Papal states. He was commissioned to hand the cardinal a letter from his Holiness citing him to appear before him in Rome where, alone, existed authority to investigate and decide ecclesiastical causes.

The citizens of the town knew absolutely nothing of his purpose or destination, still

they were satisfied that they knew something about the Italian, and soon dispersed, as there was nothing more to be seen.

In the meantime Gatterer's tall form could be seen moving slowly through the scattering crowd. He was greeted warmly on every side, and many were loud in their praise of the sweet-sounding bell he had hung in the church tower. He did not seem puffed up with the flattery, and uttered words of thanks more as a matter of politeness than to add to the esteem in which he was held. He soon entered the inn and his assistants went wherever they pleased. He told them to meet him later at the inn, where they would start for home together.

Gatterer, in addition to being a good mechanic, liked his cup. He found the landlord greatly excited, first running one way and then another, and giving orders in the kitchen and to the servants in loud

tones. He had just rolled in a fresh barrel of wine, but had fallen in doing so and was in an angry mood when one of the nobleman's servants entered. His master wanted to speak with the landlord. Mitterer, as the latter was called, removed his blouse, which was soiled by contact with the floor and wine barrel, and followed the servant.

He returned to the bar after a few minutes and, tapping the barrel, inquired if Gatterer did not want a mug. "It is the best in my cellar," he said to the latter, whom he had known for years.

"Here with it," replied Gatterer, humorously. "Wine that throws a man before taken from the cask must certainly be good."

"We have a distinguished guest to-day," explained Mitterer as he drew off the wine. "A marquis from Rome has quarters here—a great honor, is it not, master?"

"I should think so," said the latter, as

he took a seat at one of the drinking tables.

“In what direction is he bound?”

“To Hall, I hear it said,” replied the host, as he placed the wine before the guest, not forgetting to sample it beforehand. The latter then took a long draught.

“The Italian goes to Hall?” resumed Gatterer.

“Yes; he sent for me to inquire about the safety of the road and to see if it would not be necessary to strengthen his escort.”

“Well!” exclaimed Gatterer, his eyes sharply searching the landlord’s face.

“He is accompanied by five stout fellows; that, I told him, was enough. Besides, the highway is not so unsafe as it is described. No one has been attacked and robbed in a long time.”

“That is true,” indorsed Gatterer, as he took another long swallow from the mug.

Mitterer’s wife called from the kitchen and two servants immediately appeared

with platters laden with food for the distinguished guests.

Gatterer was a silent observer, and when the landlord returned he inquired: "Do you think that the travelers will remain long?"

"Merely a few hours, to take a little rest."

"Is that so?" remarked Gatterer, and then talked of other matters. The conversation did not last long, for the landlord was frequently called away to give necessary orders for the benefit of his guests.

Gatterer emptied his mug, paid his bill and was about to leave.

"You are not thinking of going already?" Mitterer inquired.

"Yes, I must look after my men. A few little things have yet to be attended to on the tower, but I will be back soon."

With these words Gatterer left the inn.

CHAPTER V

GEROLD ARRIVES TOO LATE TO WITNESS A TRAGEDY

Gatterer and his men started for home a few hours later. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when they pulled out of town by the northern gate.

Not long after the grey-haired landlord stood at his door wishing God-speed to his departing guests, for the nobleman, his wife and daughter had entered the coach and were ready to begin their journey to Hall.

Marquis Mazzini, an earnest, almost stern-looking man of more than middle age, passed some time with his wife and daughter viewing the wooded heights and the lofty, cloud-covered mountains. After a while he leaned his head back on the cush-

ions in the corner of the coach and fell into a sleep, which the heavy jerking and rattling of the vehicle did not disturb.

The wife looked anxiously upon her sleeping husband and then turned to her daughter, whom she addressed in the soft language of their native land.

“Does it not seem to you, my daughter,” she said, “that your father is worn out by the fatigues of the journey much more than he will admit?”

The daughter gazed scrutinizingly at her father and replied:

“You are right, dear mother. His face looks haggard. How I wish we were at the end of our journey or back again in Rome. Isn’t there a great difference between our beautiful country and this rough, timber-covered land?”

“Assuredly,” replied her mother. “But it was the wish of the Holy Father that your father should undertake this journey, and I couldn’t let him make it alone. I

feel much better in being allowed to share the discomforts of the trip with him. I have the consolation of knowing that I will be near him to lend assistance, in case it is needed."

A low sigh escaped Camilla's lips. "But if wicked men should attack us," she remarked oppressively, "what can you do? This place looks like a favorable haunt for bandits and highwaymen. Look at the dark, black woods which we are approaching nearer and nearer, and the huge mountains which look as if they would crush us!"

The mother smiled.

"Do not be alarmed, my child. We are in the hands of God. So far we have had no misfortune, nor do I think we will have any. Then, besides, we have reliable servants — fearless, strong men."

She looked rapidly at the five armed servants who were following at a little distance, and were calculated to beget confi-

dence in their ability to afford the necessary protection.

Her mother's comforting and encouraging words were not without effect upon Camilla, who secretly felt ashamed of her timidity.

The marquis opened his eyes. The nap had refreshed him, and he surveyed the surroundings with a bright look.

"What a beautiful view!" he exclaimed, as his eyes drank in the glorious spectacle provided by Nature.

"Truly enchanting," added the wife; "I have seen nothing more sublime in our beautiful Italy. Surely, when Nature is so admirable, the men must also be of a strong mould."

Camilla sat in silent wonder beside her mother. Both had their hands joined beneath their wraps, as if in evening prayer. A holy stillness prevailed which was broken by the song of a nightingale, borne on the soft western wind. The purple horizon

grew heavier and heavier, the sun sank lower and lower behind the mountains, twilight was changed into night. The travelers were now in the midst of the dark forest Camilla had seen in the distance.

Suddenly there was a flash on the edge of the timber, followed by a sharp crack, and the leader of the escort fell from his seat. Terrified, Marquis Mazzini sprang to his feet. He saw the members of his guard engaged in a fierce encounter with masked highwaymen. The wife of the nobleman screamed for help and Camilla fainted. Mazzini pulled his dagger from the scabbard and started to rush to the assistance of his followers. He received a heavy blow from behind, and he fell with a broken skull at his wife's feet.

In vain did the escort struggle with the robbers; they succumbed to superior strength and fell victims to the murderous onslaught. Not one escaped, but, covered with hideous wounds which bore evidence

to their fidelity, their bodies lay strewn upon the highway.

In less than fifteen minutes the bloody fight was over, and the highwaymen had disappeared in the depths of the forest with such booty as they could find, but not till they had killed the mules and one of their number had inflicted a fearful wound on the nobleman's wife, who had piteously pleaded for her life.

Dreadful, indeed, was the position in which she found herself. Her husband and their escort murdered, her daughter still unconscious, many miles away from their native land among strangers, whose language even they did not know. Her unutterable misery rendered her almost unconscious of the wound from which she was suffering.

Her swoon was a blessing to Camilla, for she would awaken too soon to the awful reality.

The dreadful misfortune had come so

suddenly that the mother was incapable of shedding tears. She was on her knees beside the dead body of her husband, her pallid face like a piece of marble. Her eyes gazed with an expression of insanity upon the dreadful scene that surrounded her, while her hands were closely clasped together. Suddenly she let a heartrending shriek, throwing herself upon her husband's corpse, upon which her tears fell in streams. The strain of her grief was broken and she was granted the relief which the broken heart finds in the tearful expression of its sorrow. The woods resounded with her deafening cries. In her sorrow for the dead she forgot the living, and the daughter lay unnoticed beside the father.

Suddenly Camilla exclaimed in a weak voice: "Mother, where am I?"

She was unable at once to recall what had happened. She stared about her with wide open eyes, as if she were tortured by some horrible dream.

“My poor, poor child!” cried the mother; “O, my Camilla!” she exclaimed in tones of agony, as she wrung her hands.

The reality in all its hideous form dawned upon the daughter; she recalled the dreadful calamity, and as she was helped to her feet by the inconsolable, weeping mother, her hot tears also fell and she shrieked in agony.

In their grief they did not notice that some one was rapidly approaching. A man stood before them, but before he could address them they let a loud scream; for they thought they beheld one of the monsters who had inflicted so much misery upon them.

“Kill us, monster!” cried the mother in wild agony. “Complete your work. You have no doubt returned for that purpose, murderer!”

She had spoken in Italian and was astonished to hear the stranger reply in the same tongue, though with a foreign accent.

“Calm yourself, noble lady. I am no murderer. I have hastened hither to assist you. My road lay in this direction, and as I approached I heard crying and screaming. I thought I would find men who had lost themselves in the dark, and what I have discovered fills me with horror. You have been attacked by robbers, noble lady.”

The latter, with what strength she could summon, related what had happened. The stranger shuddered as he listened, and gazed on the corpse of the nobleman at his feet.

“Can you help us, good friend?” inquired the mother. “If you can, do so for the love of our divine Lord. Lead us somewhere, that we can get shelter for the night, and where we can conceal the remains of the loved one who has been so brutally torn from us.”

“I will gladly help you, noble lady. Place yourself and your daughter in my care. The bell foundry is not far from here, and we will go there. We cannot bury

the body now and we must leave it here till help comes from the foundry to remove it."

The stranger then covered the body with a piece of canvas taken from the coach. The mother thanked him warmly, and then begged him to remove her and her daughter from the awful scene. She closed by saying: "Now, tell me, good man, what is your name, that I may know to whom I am indebted for so much kindness and thoughtfulness."

"You are indebted to me for nothing, dear lady," was the reply. "My name is Gerold Roemer. I am a bell-founder by trade and am working at present in the foundry. I have worked in Italy a long time, and there learned what I know of the Italian language."

When he had given this explanation to the mother and daughter he begged the former to allow him to help her, as he noticed how unsteady she was on her feet, but Ca-

milla would not be separated from her mother, and clung to her closely.

At the end of about a quarter of an hour they emerged from the wood and Gerold pointed out the yard of the foundry by the light of the moon.

“There is the foundry,” he said, pointing in the distance.

The mother made no reply, as she was too preoccupied with her dead to bestow her thoughts on anything else.

The three continued to advance, and no other sound than heavy sighs escaped the lips of the heartbroken mother and daughter, while the tears that fell in silence told of their inconsolable suffering.

CHAPTER VI

GATTERER SHOWS HIS APPRECIATION OF HIS NEW EMPLOYEE.

The unfortunate travelers were treated with the greatest sympathy at Gatterer's home. The latter had not yet returned from his journey, but his wife left nothing undone to show her hospitality to the unfortunate strangers whom Fate had driven to her for shelter. Gerold did his utmost to help the wife in her noble display of Christian charity. His knowledge of Italian came into good play, for without it the others would not have been able to understand each other.

Gerold undertook to have the body of the marquis brought to the foundry. He had intended to meet Gatterer on his way back from Sterzing, to let him know what had

happened during his absence, and it was while on this errand that he had heard the weeping and crying of the Italian lady and her daughter. He was now returning to the spot with one of his assistants, bearing a bier on which to bring the dead marquis to the foundry. They had scarcely reached the edge of the forest when they heard the rattling of wheels and noticed a wagon approaching.

"It is they," said his companion. "But I see only the driver with the horses," answered Gerold.

"The master has probably taken the short cut on foot with the others. That would shorten the distance half an hour's walk," explained the other.

Meanwhile they had advanced nearer to the wagon. The driver, who was also the owner of the team, told how, deeper in the wood, he had come upon the murdered men and their dead horses. A highway robbery must have taken place.

“And where is the master?” asked Gerold, not a little surprised to see the driver alone.

“Gatterer and the others left me on the road when we were taking a rest,” answered the driver. “He said he had to get home as soon as possible, as he had important matters to attend to in connection with a bell for Hall. I followed him in an hour.”

Gerold told him what had happened and, anxious to leave the place, he whipped up his horses and left.

While Gerold and his companion were on their way to the spot where the murder had been committed, Gatterer reached home. He had, as was said, really taken a short cut. His astonishment can be imagined, upon reaching his house and finding the marquise and her daughter, of whose terrible misfortune the wife gave an account. He expressed his sympathy as well as he could by signs and motions and instructed

his wife to do all she could to relieve their distress.

Gerold and his assistant soon arrived with the body of the marquis. At first Gatterer would not consent that it be placed in the house, but gave instructions to have it conveyed to the foundry. At the solicitation of his wife, however, he allowed it to be deposited in the room to be occupied by the mother and daughter. He remained absent from the prayers for the dead, recited in the common sitting room by his wife and the two strangers. Neither could Gerold join in the prayers, for Gatterer went at once to the foundry to see how the work had been done. There lay the bell, white and sparkling, and when Gatterer had tested the tone he pronounced it clear and full, as he had desired. He thereupon gave Gerold a hearty handshake, and congratulated him with much warmth.

“I thank you, master,” he exclaimed, “for a master mechanic you, indeed, are; I

could not have done better myself, Gerold.”

The latter felt pleased at the praise lavished on him, but said: “I have not done the work —”

“The others, you would say, have greatly helped you. It pleases me the more to see that you give credit to the others.”

The Bavarian looked strangely at Gatterer and said: “I did not mean that. It is true, I did not cast the bell alone, for the good God helped me; but I am very sorry to be obliged to tell you that I received little help from your men. On the contrary, they have annoyed me greatly and made the work much more difficult. First let me say that Hans is the worst of the whole crowd.”

Gatterer’s face clouded with anger on hearing this.

“Well, what has happened?” inquired Gatterer sharply. “Can’t I leave home a minute without the —”

He swallowed the rest, but Gerold noticed that it was not alone with Hans that he was angry, but with himself for having spoken of him in a manner that was, evidently, not agreeable to Gatterer.

“What business is it of mine?” said Gerold to himself, and then, aloud: “My good master, I have acceded to your wishes and stayed here to cast the bell. I am not to blame if your workmen have been unfriendly towards me, and even tried to do me bodily harm. Inquire how matters went. You will learn no more from me. I notice that you are not pleased because I had not spoken in praise of your workmen, and especially of Hans. I mean no harm, but simply express myself boldly and honestly, as I always do. For that reason I will take my leave immediately. This very day I will go to Hall.”

Gerold had spoken calmly but decidedly and forcibly. His manner did not fail to make an impression on Gatterer.

"Now, don't get angry so quickly," said Gatterer placatingly. "I did not entertain the thoughts you credit me with. But I will make Hans understand what it means to disobey my orders. You must not leave the foundry, Gerold. Whatever you want is yours, but you must remain."

Gerold shook his head.

"Master," he said, "you could not find any equivalent for the good fortune and happiness of visiting my poor old mother. I must first go home and greet her. If I should find her sound and healthy so that it may be safe to leave her and go elsewhere, then I will again tie up my pack and return to you. This I promise faithfully."

"Do you really mean that, Gerold?"

"Yes, master."

"Now, give me your hand on that."

Gerold gave him his hand and promised that if it were possible he would return and be his partner. Hardly had this been done

when a voice in threatening accents was heard behind Gatterer.

“Master,” said the voice, “if the Bavarian is reinstated it will be a misfortune.”

Gatterer looked behind, and there stood Hans, with bandages around his head, his face ghastly pale, and fire in his eyes.

“Hans, what do you mean?” exclaimed Gatterer. “What right have you to give me orders? I advise you to take care how you use your tongue, or, by —”

“Let God alone,” sneered Hans; “I know you better, as you are aware, and because I know you I am not afraid of your threats. Send me away, if you dare. Ha, ha, ha! You have no more power over me than the dirt under my nail.”

Gatterer gazed at his man, speechless with rage. His face flashed with anger, his frame trembled, his hands were clinched as he said:

“Go away, Hans, you are crazy from the

fever of your wounds. Go back to bed, you are sick."

"Sick? sick?" cried the man in a rage. "And if I am, whose fault is it but yours. You shoved this Bavarian under my nose. Do you forget what you promised me a year ago when I wanted to go away? You promised me your daughter Elizabeth's hand; and now you take up with this downey-beard as if he were, God knows, the best mechanic in the world. I will not permit it. Either the Bavarian goes his way to-day or, so sure as I am Hans — you will hear of something, master."

Gatterer cast a dreadful look at his workman.

"Hans, say another word, just one more," he yelled, boiling with rage, "and I will forget myself. I don't care; it is all the same to me."

Hans knew Gatterer far too well not to take this warning seriously. He allowed no one to make sport of him. For that reason

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his workman turned on his heel and left the foundry.

Then, for the first time, Gatterer learned from Gerold what had happened in his absence.

"Now, let it go, master," said Gerold. "I have forgiven them. Hans received his deserts and I owe him no grudge. Tell me that you, too, forgive them. Only on this condition will I consent to remain in the foundry."

"Well, for your sake, I will do so," answered Gatterer. "Otherwise I would have banished the offenders to-morrow." Gatterer then inquired particularly what Roemer had seen where the highway robbery occurred in the woods.

"But," cried the young man, greatly agitated, "why didn't you wish to know these things sooner? I should think the first thing you would do would be to go to the spot and convince yourself of what has happened. Oh, I can't tell you what an awful

experience I have had. I will never forget it as long as I live."

Gerold covered his face with his hands a few moments, as if to shut out the horrible sight.

"Young man," said Gatterer, "my conduct may seem strange to you, but we get used to the most shocking things. Here in our solitude we have grown accustomed to many things that would inspire others with horror and dismay. Robbery and murder are so common on the highway that I and mine — take it not ill of me for saying so — have grown used to them. Only a short distance from here, perhaps half an hour's walk, a robbery occurred not long ago, and three merchants were killed who tried to defend themselves and their property."

"That is dreadful," replied Gerold, with fresh emotion. "And can the citizens of Hall do nothing for the protection of the neighborhood?"

"Yes, they did what they could, but their

efforts were fruitless. It was more peaceful for a while, but the robbers and plunderers soon became bold again. Just now the situation is at its worst. Do you think I would keep so many men around if it were not for my own and my family's protection? But to-day's occurrence seems particularly shocking, and I am inclined to take some men with me to see if we may not find one or more of the servants alive."

"It is useless," cried Gerold painfully. "They are all dead — all!"

"Do you want to come with us, Gerold?"

"No, master, no," exclaimed the young man with averted countenance. "I will not look on the horrible scene again. I endured it once, but I believe a second glance would kill me."

"Do you really think so?" asked Gatterer; "I felt that way at first myself."

The latter then invited Gerold to accompany him to the house, where they found Margaret and her daughter listening with

blanched faces to the account of the murder and robbery.

"Wife," cried Gatterer, "I am going to the wood with some men to see for myself how the crime was committed."

"John," said the wife, with trembling lips, "you must not do that. How easy for some misfortune to happen to yourself. You cannot mend matters now, so wait, at least, till daybreak."

"No, Margaret," replied Gatterer decidedly, "I will go. I should have gone before. Gerold will remain with you, and the others will stay in the foundry. You need not fear, we shall be back in an hour."

Margaret yielded complainingly to her husband's wishes.

"Come back soon, John," she cried, "or I will die of fear and anxiety." Gatterer's voice was next heard in the yard calling by name those he wanted to accompany him. Their departing footsteps were heard, and then there was perfect stillness.

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Gerold remained in the room with the women and listened to the story of another awful crime that had been committed eighteen years before.

In an hour Gatterer returned, apparently greatly disturbed. He described what he had seen in an excited manner, and was often interrupted by exclamations of sympathy on the part of his three listeners.

"Dead — all dead!" he said. "No human aid is of any avail. I did not think it was so horrible. Gerold, you were right. One could almost drop dead of terror."

It was now late in the night and all retired to rest. The wife and daughter of the dead marquis had been assigned to the best room — that reserved for guests. Both had long before gone to their room, not to lie down or sleep, but to keep vigil over the corpse in prayer.

Nor could Gerold sleep; it was after midnight before he closed his eyes, and then only to see horrible visions in his dreams.

CHAPTER VII

GEROLD RECEIVES SOME ROUGH HANDLING

When Gerold awoke the next morning he was alarmed, for the sun was high in the heavens. He did not remember having ever slept so long. He dressed himself quickly and packed his traveling bag, for to-day he was to travel by way of Hall and Innsbruck to his home.

With his stick in his hand and his pack on his shoulders, he appeared in the sitting room, where he was to say good-bye to Gatterer and his wife. The former was not present. When the latter saw the young workman a shadow crossed her face.

“What, you are really going!” she exclaimed in painful astonishment.

“Certainly, good woman,” replied Gerold; “you know that I had determined to

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resume my journey to-day. I have come to take my leave."

He reached out his hand, but she made no attempt to take it.

"Gerold," she said, "we are not yet so far gone. You can't go away in that manner. We hoped to have you with us some days yet and, the Lord knows, we need you here badly."

While she was speaking the door opened and Camilla appeared, pale and worn, her eyes still moist with tears. Her gaze fell upon Gerold, and when she noticed him prepared for a journey, her sadness increased, she looked inquiringly and with an appeal for help at Margaret.

"Gerold," said the latter, "a new sorrow has befallen the young lady; her poor mother is very sick. We want to care for and watch over her, but we do not understand the language of the strangers, and God only knows what may happen. Her condition does not please me. Delay your

journey a few days, for the two Italian ladies need you badly in order to make themselves understood."

Camilla, who had listened eagerly, seemed to understand the meaning of some of the words uttered, for she nodded her approval and then, turning to Gerold, said in her native tongue: "Noble young man, my poor mother is very ill. She had already inquired for you, but the good landlady gave her to understand that you were going away. I have come to implore you in my mother's name to remain a few days longer, for it would be very hard for us to do anything with these good people without you. Oh, have pity on us and do not deprive us of your services till we can leave here again, which, I hope, will be in a few days."

Her appeal was so affecting that Gerold was deeply moved. He had a kind heart and did not need much time for consideration when it was a question of helping his neighbor. He turned to the landlady with-

out forgetting the young lady's face, and said: "If you will keep me a few days, I will postpone my journey."

"You did not need to ask that question first, Gerold," she replied. "Stay with us as long as you wish. You know the master hates to see you go. You will not only render the strange ladies a charitable service, but us also. The good God will reward you for your kindness."

His decision was announced and Camilla thanked him in the warmest terms. Gatterer entered at this moment, and when he learned what had happened he seemed greatly pleased.

"Now, Gerold," he exclaimed, "you see you cannot leave the foundry so easily, and I am very glad."

Camilla retired to look after her mother and Gerold returned to his room with his carpet bag.

Gatterer consulted with his wife concerning the burial of the marquis, whose body

should be interred in German territory till such time as it might be removed to Rome. The services of a physician were sorely needed for the wife, who had succumbed to the excitement she had passed through, and Gatterer made known his intention of traveling to Hall to notify the authorities of what had happened and secure the services of a doctor.

Just then Elizabeth, the daughter, rushed into the room, pale with fear, and cried in a trembling voice:

“Father, for God’s sake!”

“What is the matter, Elizabeth?” inquired father and mother, together.

“Out there in the yard,” was the reply. “One of the men is quarreling with the Bavarian. They have knocked him down and he is bleeding. Hans is the worst; he screams and curses as if he were crazy.”

Gatterer did not hear his daughter through. He was in the yard in an instant. It was as Elizabeth had said. The

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workmen, led by Hans, had assaulted Gerold with their fists. The latter could not long withstand the combined strength of his enemies, and fell almost senseless to the ground with blood gushing from the forehead and cheeks.

Gatterer asked no questions; he knew what had happened. Hans had learned that Gerold was to remain and had incited some of his roughest associates to join him in attacking the stranger.

“Master,” cried Hans, “I told you some misfortune would happen — there you have it. We will not allow ourselves to be treated as you see fit.”

Gatterer did not utter a word. Like a flash he rushed at Hans, caught him by the throat with one hand, and with the other, which he had clinched, struck him a fearful blow in the face. Then he gave him a kick, and Hans fell to the ground with a groan.

Gatterer then turned to the others, who

had left Gerold. They were frightened by Gatterer's vigorous interference.

"Who will dare act contrary to my wishes again? You cowardly dogs, you would attack a defenseless man. Be off at once, or I will smash the head of every one of you!"

They obeyed him in silence, although with scorn and defiance in their countenances. Gerold meantime had risen to his feet. His wounds were not serious. Gatterer washed them with fresh water from a spring in the yard. His wife, who had approached, helped to apply some bandages.

"John," she said, "I hope you will keep those rascals no longer. The foundry will get a bad name from the class of men we have had lately. Nothing but carousing and rioting, cursing and blaspheming, is to be heard."

"Wait a little, Margaret, we will soon change all that," replied Gatterer. "I will look around for different workmen. If they can only be found! And now, Gerold, you

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will be less anxious to remain with us. I do not blame you."

"Master," returned the latter, "I want to say that I will not leave the foundry just now. I will not be intimidated, even if I should be killed. Yesterday I asked you to pardon the culprits. I will not do so to-day. They have attacked me treacherously when I least expected it."

Elizabeth now came forward and gazed sympathetically at Gerold, her cheeks still pallid with fear.

"Are the wounds dangerous?" she inquired.

"Oh, no, Miss Elizabeth," answered Gerold, who greatly appreciated her sympathy. "My skull is not so thin that it can't stand a few raps."

Gatterer then directed a few of the workmen to carry Hans, who still lay apparently lifeless on the ground, to a bed-room in the house.

"I did not wish to do it," said Gatterer

apologetically, "but my blood rises when I see my men disobey my orders."

Hans was removed and Gatterer instructed his wife to look after him.

"How do you feel, Gerold?" he inquired.

"Thank you, master, I feel only a slight burning. I will be all right soon. I hope now you will assign me to work. I am not used to idleness, and so long as I can move my hands I will not think of my burning head."

At first Gatterer would not listen to this but Gerold insisted and wanted to be entrusted with another casting.

The other workmen received Gerold in silence when he entered the foundry, accompanied by Gatterer. The latter informed them that they should keep the peace and obey his instructions.

The workmen listened to their employer, but none dared to criticise. Gerold was then shown what he had to do, and set to work.

CHAPTER VIII

GATTERER PAYS A VISIT TO THE PRIORY

Gatterer went to Hall, as he had arranged. He found the populace greatly excited, for travelers who had arrived brought news of the awful crime that had been committed on the public highway.

As Gatterer approached the city hall he met a troop of armed men who were going to where the murders had been committed, in order to bring the dead bodies to the city for burial. He entered the building and imparted to the authorities the information he had obtained relative to the crime. His description of the scene he had witnessed provoked cries of horror. The mayor, whose name was Harracher, convened the council at once for the purpose of taking such measures as might be neces-

sary to put an end to the commission of such horrible crimes and for the future protection of the citizens. While the council was deliberating on how to secure safety and security for the citizens, Gatterer went in search of a physician. He next visited the Franciscan Monastery, where he repeated to the prior the story he had related to the civil authorities. "And now, I beg of you, Father Prior," he concluded, "to give my son permission to go with me to the foundry. He understands Italian, as you know, and as there is no telling how the sickness of the Italian lady may end, I think it advisable to give her the benefit of a confessor so that she may be prepared if called on."

The aged prior praised Gatterer for his thoughtful care and replied:

"Certainly, I will gladly send Father Adalbert to the foundry." He then disappeared for a few minutes and returned with a very young and pale-faced man. This

was Father Adalbert, son of the bell-founder. When he had ended his studies at Innsbruck seven years before, he had joined the Franciscan order and had been ordained as a priest the year previous. When he saw his father he bowed his shorn head with reverential love.

"God bless you, dear father," he said, "I hear that you want me."

"Yes, my son, you will come with me; the father prior has already told me so. There is a noble Italian lady at our house who is very ill."

"I know all about it," replied the monk, with a glance at his superior.

"Go prepare yourself for the trip, Father Adalbert," instructed the latter, "and your father and I will talk together a little while."

Father Adalbert bowed in silence and left the room.

"It is well, Gatterer, that you came to-day," began the prior. "There is an im-

portant matter that I wanted to discuss with you. When you were here before I was unable to see you, as I was absent."

"Well, Father Prior, what have you to talk to me about? Is it anything connected with Father Adalbert?"

"It is," returned the prior; "have you noticed nothing in his appearance?"

"I thought he looked paler to-day than usual."

"So you notice it also! I have noticed it for some time, but attached no great importance to it, as Father Adalbert has always been pale since he entered the priory. Lately, however, it seems more pronounced and is accompanied by a slight cough which does not please me. He does not complain, although I have inquired how he felt. But that is his way. He is a model of patient endurance for all his brethren. I have resolved to send him to Italy, perhaps to Rome, for his health. The southern climate will do him good, I hope."

"Let it be as you decide, Father Prior," replied Gatterer. "I believe myself that a change would do him no harm. That suggests something to me. How would it do for him to accompany the Italian nobleman's wife; that is, of course, if she recovers from her sickness. The poor woman and her daughter would travel more safely in the company of a monk."

The prior nodded his head thoughtfully.

"That needs reflection, Mr. Gatterer," he replied, after a short pause. "I will see what can be done in the matter."

Father Adalbert now appeared with a prayer book in one hand and a walking stick in the other.

"I am ready, Father Prior," he said, turning to his superior.

"Go, then, in the name of God and His blessed Mother," returned the prior.

Gatterer took leave of the latter, who told him to call again soon, and promised in the meantime to consider what was to be done.

Scarcely had father and son appeared upon the street when a messenger from the council approached the former.

“Master bell-founder,” he cried, “I have been searching for you. They want you in the chamber.”

“And what do they want me for?” inquired Gatterer, with a look of astonishment.

The messenger could give no information. He knew only that his presence was very much desired.

“Tell the honorable body that I will be there immediately.” Then, turning to the priest, he said, “You can go ahead and I will follow after, as soon as possible.”

Father Adalbert complied with his father’s wishes.

In the hall Gatterer found the council in session. When he inquired why he was wanted, the president told him that they wanted him to repeat the story of the murders and robbery. This he did, without contradicting any of his former state-

ments. When he had concluded a servant announced that a horseman had come from the scene of the murder and had found some papers which he wished to deliver to the president. He was allowed to come forward. He was armed to the teeth and wore high cavalry boots.

“Who are you and what brings you here?” inquired the president.

“I am a citizen of Absam and my name is Branner. In coming here through the woods I saw a coach in the ditch, the horses killed and five or six corpses lying around. Close by, in the bushes, I saw rolls of parchment and papers which I read and have here to deliver to your honorable body.”

He handed the package to the president. “And you saw nothing else — no broken boxes or chests?” inquired the president.

“Nothing of the kind, positively nothing. I also found this gold chain and locket.” Branner took a neck chain from the hilt of his sword and handed it to the president,

who took it and placed it on the table in front of him.

Scarcely had Gatterer beheld it when his eyes opened widely and astonishment was depicted on his countenance. Was it the gold that fascinated him or the artful workmanship that made him wonder?

The president turned once more to Gatterer. "Did you not say," he inquired, "that you saw broken boxes where the crime was committed?"

"As well as my workmen and myself could judge by the light of the torches, boxes and chests were lying strewn around. I think most of them were empty. I can't very well remember, as we were all so terrified that we had little sense left."

"And you saw no trace of these things, Branner?" he asked the newcomer.

"Not the least," was the reply. "The robbers must have removed everything during the night."

"I thank you," said the president to Bran-

ner and Gatterer, "for your information. Unfortunately it throws little light on the mystery. May heaven guide us. The honorable council will never rest till the criminals are captured and have received the punishment due to their horrible crime."

Branner and Gatterer were dismissed and the parchment rolls and papers were carefully examined. From them it was learned who the Marquis Mazzini was and the nature of his mission. The murder of a papal delegate naturally gave greater importance to the crime in the eyes of the council and strengthened them in the resolve to rid their city and vicinity of robbers and murderers.

CHAPTER IX

CAMILLA IS LEFT AN ORPHAN

Gatterer joined his son about half an hour's walk from the city. The latter suddenly exclaimed:

"Look there, father!"

Gatterer looked in the direction indicated and saw a troop of armed men emerge from the woods which stretched to the east. In the center of the troop a wagon was visible which was drawn by horses.

"They are bringing the marquis' conveyance to the city," said Gatterer to Father Adalbert.

"The bodies of the murdered men are undoubtedly in it," said the latter.

"Undoubtedly."

Both watched the procession for a while and then resumed their journey, which led

them in an opposite direction. They finally reached the foundry. Father Adalbert greeted his mother and sister warmly, for he had not seen those at home for some time.

"How is the invalid?" he inquired of Mrs. Gatterer.

"The doctor is with her," replied the mother. "She has a bad fever and is raving deliriously about all sorts of things. I greatly fear she will never recover."

"Let us hope for the best," urged her husband. "What the poor lady has gone through is enough to drive any one crazy, but women are so constituted that they can endure much more than men."

"God grant that it be so in this case, anyhow," said Father Adalbert piously. "Let us pray for her in the hope that heaven will be merciful."

The door opened and a tall, lean man, clad in black velvet, entered the room. It was Doctor Scharer, a learned man famous as a surgeon and versed in alchemy and as-

trology. Those present gazed upon his earnest countenance with consternation.

“It is plain,” said Gatterer, “that you have not much hope for the patient. What do you think, doctor?”

“You have guessed rightly,” replied the doctor thoughtfully. “She can hardly recover. I have scarcely any hope for her; she has a high fever and is out of her senses.”

“Poor woman!” sighed Mrs. Gatterer.

“Poor Camilla!” added Elizabeth.

“Can I see the patient now?” inquired the young priest. “I cannot do much for her if she is out of her senses, as you say, Doctor Scharer.”

Father Adalbert was still speaking when suddenly loud ejaculations and weeping were heard. All hastened out and a pitiful scene was presented to view. Camilla was on her knees on the floor wringing her hands, with tears streaming from her eyes. She called to her mother in her native tongue

and only ceased when choked by her sobs. When she saw the monk in his coarse gown she crawled to him on her knees, lifted her trembling hands and cried in Italian, "My mother, my poor mother! She is dying, she is dying!" Then she fell unconscious at the priest's feet.

"My God!" exclaimed the priest, painfully, "she says her mother is dying; take me to her."

"Doctor Scharer," said Gatterer, who was the most self-possessed, "you had better take care of the daughter. Elizabeth will assist you."

He then took Camilla from the floor in his stout arms and carried her to Elizabeth's room, where he laid her on a bed. He then hastened away, leaving the young girl to the care of the doctor and Elizabeth. Meanwhile, Mrs. Gatterer had accompanied her son to the bedside of the mother, who was in the death struggle. The priest recited the prayers for the dying, accompanied by

his mother, in a voice trembling with emotion. The soul fled while the prayers were being recited and Mrs. Gatterer closed the eyelids.

"She is dead, mother," said the priest, and he knelt once more in silence to utter a prayer for the departed soul.

The doctor, followed by Gatterer, now entered the room. The former confirmed the statement of Father Adalbert. Gatterer looked upon the corpse without uttering a word. His eyes took on a strange expression. It seemed as if the horror of his soul was gazing through them.

The features of the corpse were somewhat distorted. The left eye was half open and was looking towards where Gatterer stood. He changed his position, going a few feet to one side, but he still had the impression and painful sensation that the eye had followed him. He went up to the doctor and asked: "How is the daughter?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

“Her senses have returned,” he answered, “but she is in luck if she, too, is not attacked with a severe sickness. She is a delicate, weak creature. Be prepared for anything, Gatterer. In the meantime she must be carefully watched. A sight of this would be attended by the worst consequences.”

Gatterer assented.

“The body will be taken to Hall to-day for burial. Is not that the best, doctor?”

“If you think so, yes,” replied the latter.

Father Adalbert and his mother rose from their knees. Both approved Gatterer’s plan and the latter left the death chamber to make the necessary preparations. His wife went to Camilla to render what assistance might be necessary, and the priest and physician remained behind with the corpse.

On the floor lay the dead body of the marquis, on the bed that of his wife—it was a sight to draw tears from the most

hard-hearted, a fearful sermon on the emptiness and nothingness of earthly affairs.

Gatterer had two biers brought, upon which the bodies were placed. The workmen engaged in this task did not utter a word, but glanced stealthily at one another, and it was easy enough to see with what reluctance they carried out their master's instructions. Only Gerold remained away, nor did Gatterer call on him for help.

The funeral cortége was in motion within an hour. Eight pallbearers went ahead with the two biers, followed immediately by Father Adalbert, Gatterer and the doctor. In this manner they proceeded to Hall.

Mrs. Gatterer remained with the orphaned girl who was too weak from the excitement to rise from the bed, and in this way she was spared the pain of witnessing the removal of both her parents. She lay for a long time limp and stunned with grief and heartache. Finally she uttered a few faint words:

“Elizabeth,” instructed the mother, “go and bring Gerold from the foundry so he may tell us what she wants.”

Margaret whispered a few words to Gerold when he came.

“Do not tell her,” she said, “that the bodies of her parents have been taken away.”

Gerold inquired of Carmilla how she felt and what she wanted.

“Oh, I am so sick and wretched,” she complained, “I wish I were dead, where is my mother? Is she still alive or is she dead? Oh, my mother, my poor mother! Let me go to her.” She attempted to rise but Elizabeth prevented her and Gerold said: “The doctor has given instructions that you should keep very quiet. You must follow these instructions. You cannot see your mother, now.”

“But I must go to her. I must see my mother; no one can prevent me.”

And, before those standing around could interfere, she sprang from the bed with a

despairing effort and fled from the room. She rushed to her mother's chamber and found it — empty!

With a loud scream she fell to the floor, unconscious. She was taken back to bed and it was only after much trouble that she was restored to consciousness.

CHAPTER X

THE TWO CHAINS

The bodies were buried the same day. The deepest sympathy was felt by the whole population of the city and not one but wished to see the murderers caught and hanged. Gatterer attended the funeral after sending his workmen home. He afterwards went to the mayor and asked him for the chain which the citizen from Absam had found where the crime had been committed.

“I will deliver it to the poor, dear daughter,” he said.

The official consented to this arrangement and gave Gatterer the gold chain and locket with which the latter started for home.

When some little distance from the city he drew the chain from his pocket and inspected it long and carefully. He tried to

open the locket but did not succeed at first. Finally he discovered a small spring on pressing which the sides flew open. In the little frame was the photograph of a young girl of tender years. On beholding it a cry of painful surprise escaped Gatterer's lips. He stared at the picture with incredible scrutiny and as often as he tried to close the locket it seemed that an invisible hand prevented him from succeeding. Finally he exclaimed impatiently: "That is but a delusion of Satan, a mere deception and nothing more. Ha, faces are often alike!"

He pressed the cover with his thumb and the face was hidden in the locket which he returned to his pocket.

Suddenly on the edge of the wood the form of a man appeared and stood immediately in front of Gatterer who was astounded by the vision.

"What brings you here, Hans?" he exclaimed as he looked searchingly at his workman.

“My feet brought me as feet bring every one,” replied Hans with a sneer.

“And what do you want here? Why are you not at work in the foundry?” demanded Gatterer.

“Work!” laughed Hans, coarsely. “What do you think, master? You first knock me on the skull till my head is buzzing like a cracked bell and then you ask why I am not at work. That won’t do. And what am I here for? I want to see you and have a few words with you. I could not talk to you in the house as ‘walls have ears.’”

“So that is why you are here, Hans? Well, what do you want from me?”

“That is easily told, master. Am I to have Elizabeth or do you want to fool me much longer? I want to know where I stand, master.”

“Where you stand, Hans? I will tell you that at once. You either return with me to work immediately or —”

Gatterer cast a fearfully threatening look at Hans. He was like a wild beast ready to spring on his prey.

“You want to use force with me, master. Do you wish, at last, to lay me beside the others?”

At these words Hans pointed to the woods.

“You know what you owe me, Hans. You have sworn to obey me and have given me power over your body and your life. Have you not?”

“Ha!” laughed the man bitterly. “It is a poor bargain that brings me nothing. You speak of your rights but say nothing of your duty. It was not to be so when I swore fealty to you. I was to have Elizabeth.”

“And when did I say, Hans, that you should not have her? Did I say you should not? No. But I tell you now that I will not let you dictate to me when you shall get her. Don’t be in a hurry, Hans, Elizabeth knows nothing of our arrangement. In view

of what has just happened on the highway I could not think of having a wedding in the house at present. My wife would not consent and what would the people of the city say? Can't you look ahead a little, Hans?"

The man was silent. Then he exclaimed in a tone of despair: "And how about the Bavarian?"

"About Gerold? Ha, ha! I thought so," cried Gatterer. "I have taken him, not because he is a good workman, but because he may be useful later on in other ways."

"Do you think so?" inquired Hans with a short laugh. "You are on the wrong track, master. Gerold is a praying fool who would do better with the Franciscans in Hall than at the foundry. If you hope to use him you are mistaken."

"Time will tell, Hans. I have converted others besides Gerold. Wait a while and you will see him fling his beads into the mud and join the gang."

“And have you no other purpose in regard to him, master?” inquired Hans with a look that gave evidence of distrust.

“What else would I want him for? When he shows himself unwilling to join the others he will have to pack his bundle and leave.”

“Are you serious, master?”

“May the thunder strike me dead,” swore Gatterer, “if I am not. Elizabeth shall have none but you. I keep my promises as you ought to know.”

“I believe you, master.”

“And will you return with me?”

“I will,” said Hans, and both proceeded homewards.

On his arrival at home Gatterer learned what had happened to Camilla during his absence and he seemed greatly afflicted. Indeed, her condition did not make it improbable that she also, might succumb. The wife and Elizabeth did everything possible to save her life and a messenger was de-

spatched for the doctor with instructions that he should return to the foundry at once.

Gatterer retired to an adjoining room. In one corner stood a large iron-bound box which he opened and in which he placed the gold chain and locket without showing them to anyone. He then locked the box carefully and returned to the outer room.

After a while, he called his daughter to him. "Elizabeth," said he, "bring me the gold chain I gave you on your birthday. Your mother will celebrate her birthday next month, and I want to have another chain like yours made for her. Philippo, the goldsmith, is quite an artist and will be able to do the work, but you must not tell your mother."

"Certainly not, father," promised the daughter and she went to fetch the chain.

"Here it is, father," she said on returning. "My mother will be delighted with such a present."

Gatterer took the chain without further

remark and, leaving the room, again went to the iron-bound chest from which he took the other chain and compared it with that he had received from Elizabeth. Both were exactly alike, even to the lockets. Gatterer was so absorbed in making the comparison that he did not hear the door open. Suddenly he heard the call, "Father, come to mother at once!"

At these words he shrunk together with fear. He grew pale and looked towards the door, on the threshold of which stood Elizabeth. Seeing the two chains in her father's hand she wished in her joy to go forward and admire them but a look from her father held her back.

"Cursed women folk! A man can keep no secret from you," he exclaimed in anger. "Get away from here, Elizabeth, and don't dare to say anything to your mother." The daughter stammered a few words of excuse and quickly obeyed her father.

"I will be there immediately," said Gat-

terer. He placed both chains in the box which he again locked and went to his wife who was sitting with Camilla.

"You called me," he said, "what is the matter now? I will go crazy with excitement. I can't be alone a minute."

"And is it any better with me?" retorted the wife reproachfully. "You have just returned from the city and did not remain by my side an instant. Am I to be the only witness of this complaining and suffering. Look at the unfortunate creature how she is tortured with fever!"

Just then Camilla opened her eyes and when she saw Gatterer, let a piercing cry which pierced the brain and sounded through the whole house.

"What is the matter with her?" exclaimed Gatterer, dumbfounded.

"She does that frequently," replied the wife. "I won't know what to do if the doctor does not come."

"I can't help the matter, wife," replied

Gatterer impatiently. "Is it my fault that the situation is what it is?"

"If you had taken my advice when I wanted you to sell the foundry and go elsewhere," replied the wife beginning to cry.

"Do you think I am a fool?" cried Gatterer, "to sell the business built up by my father and grandfather. I would not do that if I were to get all Tyrol in exchange. And now let me alone with your silly twaddle."

She looked him sharply in the face. There was determination stamped on her features.

"And I tell you, John," she said, "I will never rest till you leave this accursed spot. Yes, an accursed spot it is! I tell you so once more."

"Fright has caused you to lose your senses, it appears," replied Gatterer warmly. "When you become rational again I will talk to you." And he turned away, leaving his wife in tears.

CHAPTER XI

GEROLD ACTS AS INTERPRETER

Though at first it seemed as if there were little hope of Camilla's recovery she improved under the care of Mrs. Gatterer and Elizabeth. When the doctor arrived he found her much better, and expressed the opinion that in a few days she would be all right. At the same time he gave special instructions that she should not be informed concerning the burial of her parents.

On the following day the fever had left her, but not so that she could leave her bed. The second day she had more fully recovered and her first inquiry was for her mother.

"Dor'e la mia madre?" she asked and Elizabeth, who understood what she said, told her she must keep quiet as she was very

sick. But, either because she misunderstood her or for the reason that she suspected that all was not right she burst out sobbing and lamenting and invoked the name of her mother incessantly. Even if Elizabeth had been able to speak Italian she could have afforded no consolation and all she could do was to mingle her tears with those of the unfortunate. Thoroughly exhausted by the expression of her grief, Camilla finally fell into a profound sleep from which she awoke with a feeling of resignation to the will of divine providence. She beckoned to Elizabeth who approached, and taking her hand pressed it fervently and kissed it in expression of her unspeakable gratitude. From that moment the two young girls became fond friends and Camilla improved daily.

A week passed and the patient was able to sit up and, a little later, to go into the open air, supported by Elizabeth and her mother. Through the intercession of the latter, Gerold was sometimes allowed to act as interpreter.

After a while Camilla asked Gerold how far it was to the city.

“About an hour’s walk,” answered Gerold. “I want to go to Hall,” she said, “when I am sufficiently well,” and then she lapsed into a sad silence — she wanted to visit the graves of her parents.

Suddenly she said to Gerold: “Take me to the place in the woods where the robbers attacked us.”

Gerold was startled and communicated Camilla’s wishes to Elizabeth who objected on the ground that her father had insisted that Gerold should always be within call from the foundry. Camilla then said she would go there alone if some one would only point out the way. Elizabeth wanted to know why she was so anxious to visit a spot with which such sad memories were associated.

“Ah,” sighed Camilla, “I lost something I hold very dear there. I know it was in my possession when I recovered from my

swoon, for I held it firmly in my hand lest the robbers might deprive me of it. It was a beautiful golden chain. I think it can be found there and, if so, I would make you a present of it, Elizabeth, for I will never, never again wear an ornament of any kind."

"What kind of a chain was it?" inquired Elizabeth by means of the interpreter.

Camilla was about to describe the chain when a voice in the distance called, "Gerold! Gerold!"

It was Gatterer who called to his workman to return at once.

Gerold expressed his regret to Camilla and returned to the foundry.

"What do you want, master?" he inquired of Gatterer who was coming towards him, very much excited and apparently in a great hurry.

Gatterer explained that he wanted him to go to a near-by town where a bell had burst which the parish priest wanted examined. He could not go himself as he was busy with

a cast and would like to have Gerold go instead.

As they were going towards the foundry Gatterer asked casually how he had entertained Camilla.

Gerold replied that she wanted to go to where the robbery had been committed to search for a chain which she had lost.

“Lost!” exclaimed Gatterer, “It must certainly have fallen into the hands of the robbers.”

Gerold explained how and why Camilla thought otherwise.

“She is certainly mistaken,” replied Gatterer. “Who knows where the chain is?”

Both then entered the foundry.

Meanwhile the two young girls continued their walk without being able to renew the conversation. Elizabeth could not cease thinking of the lost chain and deplored Camilla’s inability to describe it without Gerold’s assistance. She thought of her father and the chain she remembered to have

seen him examining in secret when she spoke so harshly to her. Could it be possible that he had found the chain in the woods and was retaining it through some unknown motive? Or did he intend to keep it? This she could not believe. And why did he ask her for her chain? It was singular that he never thought of having a chain made on any of her mother's previous birthdays.

Elizabeth found no satisfactory explanation of the difficulty. She was greatly puzzled and longed to solve the problem.

CHAPTER XII

GATTERER MAKES A FEW ARRANGEMENTS

When Elizabeth and Camilla reached the house they found Gerold in readiness for his journey. The former could not help inquiring where he was going. This was the result of a pardonable curiosity arising from a secret interest.

“Your father is sending me to Mils,” was the reply.

“A safe and speedy return, Gerold,” she cried, as he left the house.

In the workshop the men were engaged in making a new casting, but when Gatterer said that his presence was necessary he did not tell the truth. He had wished to give Hans the honor of casting the new bell and in this way convince him of restored con-

fidence. Hans felt not only exalted over his companions but drawn closer to his master whom he forgave the injuries he had done him.

The casting could not be postponed, and as Gatterer had to go to the city he thought it would be a good stroke of policy to entrust Hans with the work. At the same time he sent Gerold to Mils not that there was any need of haste to examine the broken bell, but because, for reasons best known to himself, he wanted him and Camilla to be together as little as possible.

Before Gatterer left the house he said to Elizabeth in secret: "Elizabeth, I am now going to Philippo the Jeweler. You know why. Look, here is your chain which I am taking along as a model," and he pulled out a piece of the chain from under his blouse thus enabling her to recognize it as her own. "But, you must be silent," he said impressively. "But one word — and you spoil all my pleasure."

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She promised to preserve the strictest silence.

On his arrival at Hall Gatterer went immediately to see Harracher, the mayor.

“What brings you here, Gatterer?” inquired the official.

“A very serious business,” was the reply. “It is in relation to the Italian young lady who is stopping at my house. We must think of sending her home; she is anxious to return to her native land.”

“I believe you, friend Gatterer. Have you thought of any way to accomplish it?”

“Yes, I have. This is my idea, the city must do its share. The Marquis’ coach is here and let the city provide horses and an armed guard to escort the young lady to the Italian border. I will also send some of my men. Besides, my son, Father Adalbert, will probably go along, as the father prior is anxious that he should go to Rome for his health.

Harracher reflected a moment and said:

“Your proposition is entitled to consideration, Gatterer. The city is certainly bound to convey the Marquis’ daughter to her own country. How soon does she think of leaving?”

“That has not been settled. The sooner the better, you will easily understand. I will go immediately to the prior and inquire concerning my son.”

“And you will bring back word?”

Gatterer promised to do so and left. He learned at the priory that the excitement to which he had been subjected at the foundry had rendered Father Adalbert’s condition more serious, and the prior promised to send an older monk along with him so that he might join Camilla’s party.

“Do you want to speak with Father Adalbert?” inquired the prior.

“No,” replied Gatterer, “I have very little time to-day and must hasten home. When will my son be ready for the journey?”

"He may be sufficiently recovered in a few days," said the prior, "but we should know when the young lady will be ready."

"That I can't tell you to-day, Father Prior," replied Gatterer. "But in any event she will begin the journey some time this week. I will come for my son."

He then explained to the prior what had occurred with the mayor and took his departure.

In the vicinity of the monastery stood a three-story house with a high gable and two narrow balconies. This belonged to a prominent citizen, to the goldsmith Philippo, whose ancestors had come from Rome. Alexander, the present head of the firm, was regarded as a wonderful workman. He was in his shop when Gatterer entered. After a short greeting the jeweler turned the conversation to the crime that was engrossing public attention. Gatterer was finally forced to say that there was something else he wished to speak about.

“I have a job for you,” he said. “Look at this,” and he presented the chain to Philippo.

“What a beautiful piece of work!” exclaimed the jeweler. “How did you get possession of it, Gatterer?”

“Well!” said the latter, laughing, “you know my father was often in Italy and on his last trip he brought this from Florence. He made a present of it to my mother and it has been an heirloom since. I gave it to my daughter Elizabeth last year. Now I want one just like it for my wife and you must make it, Master Philipppo.”

“If you give me three months to do it in,” returned the jeweler.

“What! Do you need so much time? I thought four weeks would be enough for such an artist as you.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed the jeweler. “You don’t think I am a wizard? Only look at the beautiful workmanship; every link is made out of hundreds of threads.

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No, Gatterer, in four weeks I could not do it."

"But, try," returned Gatterer. "Charge double the price for the work, but you must have it ready in four weeks."

Philippo shook his head. "It is of no use; it is impossible. If you gave me ten times the price I couldn't do it. Is there no alternative?"

"Well!" exclaimed Gatterer.

"I can make you a similar chain of plain links. Wouldn't that do?"

"Very well, but I must have it for St. Margaret's day."

"Certainly, you shall have it by that time," replied Philippo.

Gatterer left the chain with the jeweler and then, having completed his business, departed immediately for home.

When he had left, Phillippo again examined the chain carefully. He opened the locket and found it empty. The artistic workmanship aroused his interest, seemingly,

to a high degree. Suddenly he stammered: "What! Do my eyes deceive me?"

On the under side of the locket, close to the rim, a mark was visible. It was so small that it required the eye of an expert to detect it. It consisted of a small circle with three stars in the centre. It was the mark of the goldsmith who had made the chain.

"That is the trade mark of the Philippos," he exclaimed in astonishment. "See here, Bernard. There are three stars surrounded by a circle!"

Bernard, the oldest workman, came forward and confirmed the assertion of Alexander, as did the other workmen, in turn.

"The work of a Filippo!" said the goldsmith, as his eyes flashed with pride. "That was made in Rome, and now a stroke of good luck places it in my hands. Ah! the Philippos were great artists."

A look of extreme satisfaction appeared in his countenance.

"Now, we will undertake the job and Gat-

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terer will see what a Philippo can do when he wishes."

He was able to do no work on the chain that day, notwithstanding his resolve. A nobleman of the vicinity appeared as he was about to begin his preparations, and gave him a very urgent order which could not be postponed; but he hoped to make up for lost time later on by doubling his efforts in behalf of Gatterer.

CHAPTER XIII

ELIZABETH BECOMES CURIOUS

Gerold returned from Mils sooner than Gatterer had expected. When he entered the foundry a malicious smile of joy played upon the countenances of his associates. Hans stood near the furnace from which the others were removing the stopper.

“Now, we will show you, Bavarian, that we can do something,” yelled Hans contemptuously. The seething metal was poured into the mould and a blinding vapor arose.

Gerold made no answer but looked on at the work.

“Do you see?” continued Hans, “We have completed the job without your assistance.”

“I am very glad,” returned Gerold, “I

never entertained any doubt of your skill. It would be too bad if only one or a few understood the business."

With these words he turned on his heel and left the foundry. "They do not worry me," he said to himself. And, in fact, he was not sorry in the least that the casting had not been entrusted to him. Another consideration, however, produced a bitter feeling. He thought he had discovered Gatterer's real motive in sending him to Mils. It was merely to get rid of him till the cast was completed. Gatterer's conduct became a puzzle to him. It seemed as though, of late, he had been less friendly, though there was no reason for any change. He would not acknowledge that Gatterer was not prompted by some secret motive in his strange and sudden preference for Hans.

While he was busy with these thoughts and as he was going to the house he encountered Camilla and Elizabeth. Unconsciously he adverted to the conversation which Gat-

terer had interrupted and he determined to avail himself of the opportunity afforded for renewing it. He, therefore, turned to Camilla and after warmly greeting her said:

“Have you obtained no trace of your chain, Miss?”

“No, not the slightest,” she replied. Elizabeth instructed him to ask her what it looked like.

Camilla described the chain minutely. Elizabeth listened in wonderment. The description fitted exactly the chain she had received from her father as a birthday gift, only that her locket contained no picture. Unwillingly, she was compelled to exclaim: “Gerold, I have just such a chain. If my father had not taken it to-day to Philipppo, the jeweler —”

She stopped short in fright. Gatterer had entered from the yard and had heard her words.

“What is that about Philipppo?” he said with a fierce look that told of his secret

anger. "What were you speaking about, Elizabeth?"

"About — the — chain," she answered, blushing.

"Can't you keep quiet, you disobedient girl," he said, half aloud. "If your mother hears of it, her pleasure will be spoiled. Did I not tell you to be silent till her birthday?"

"Forgive me, father. I thought —" "You did not think, but spoke like a ninny," scolded Gatterer. He then turned to Gerold.

"Back already?" he said in a rough voice. "And have you nothing better to do than to waste time with the women folks?"

"You accuse me wrongfully, master," replied Gerold, controlling himself. "I have been at the foundry where I discovered that I was not needed and not desiring to be made a fool of by Hans, I left."

"You are too high strung, Gerold," answered Gatterer in an unfriendly tone.

“Every word has a different meaning to you from what is intended. That is not the style of an upright workman.”

“Nor is it,” retorted Gerold, “the part of an upright employer to flatter to-day the workman whom he chastised yesterday because of his offenses. Listen, master, you are a famous bell-founder, but fame is not everything. In short, I will pack my bag to-day — I see that the foundry is not the place for me.”

“Gerold,” cried Elizabeth, “you will certainly —”

The girl lost her color and became deathly pale.

“Keep quiet, Elizabeth,” said the father contemptuously. “If he wants to go I cannot keep him, nor will I undertake to try.”

“Don’t be alarmed, master,” replied Gerold, “I will not be detained any longer.”

He went toward the house to arrange his effects.

“Father, don’t let him leave,” implored Elizabeth with a supplicating voice, “please don’t.”

Gatterer looked at her reproachfully. “Well, have we got so far!” he cried sneeringly, “now he goes immediately. If I had thought that before!”

“You don’t understand me, father, Gerold knows nothing. Ask him to remain not on my account, but on Camilla’s. How are we to understand her?”

“I will attend to that,” replied the father. “I will keep no one against his will.”

“You will be sorry, father,” said Elizabeth mildly.

“What are you jabbering about,” exclaimed Gatterer in surprise. “What have I neglected or failed to do that I should be sorry for? Or, perhaps you want to go along with him?”

“Father!” exclaimed the daughter painfully, holding back her tears with difficulty. She beckoned to Camilla who instinctively

understood what was happening, and turned away.

When the mother learned what had occurred she was greatly grieved. Gerold had not been like her husband's other workmen and had found favor in her eyes. Secretly she observed how Elizabeth had been drawn to him and she had nourished the hope that the young people might be united some day.

Gerold approached her to say good-bye and extended his hand.

"Are you really going, Gerold?" she exclaimed, "we had grown to like you so much."

"Yes, Mrs. Gatterer," he answered as if he too, felt pained by the separation. "Good-bye and accept my thanks for all the goodness and kindness you have shown me, since I have been with you."

"It is too bad you are going. I wish you could stay and all the others would go away; there is not one good among them."

At these words Gatterer appeared. His

features, previously as immovable as bronze, had assumed a softer expression.

"You are really determined?" he inquired with a feeling of secret displeasure.

"By all means, master; we are not congenial, the other workmen and I."

"Then go. Here is your money," and taking an abrupt leave, he hastened away.

Elizabeth meanwhile exchanged a few words with her mother and disappeared from the room. She soon returned and handed Gerold a gold ring with blue stones. "Take this," she said, "in remembrance of us and if Fate should ever direct your footsteps in this direction again, do not pass us by."

She spoke in a voice full of feeling that went to Gerold's heart. He accepted the gift saying he was sorry he had none to give in return. He was sorry to leave and, with God's blessing, would return to the foundry some day.

Camilla, meanwhile, had stood behind the others. She now came forward and asked

Gerold if he were really going away. His reply led her to express her regret and she thanked him warmly for the kind services he had rendered her. Her poverty prevented her from giving him some token of her gratitude but she would not forget him when she returned to her native land.

“Remember me kindly,” replied Gerold, “that will be sufficient reward for all I have done, which is but little.”

This she promised to do and he then bade adieu to all and walked away with a heavy heart.

The foundry was far behind him as he turned to take a last look at its gloomy walls. He then plunged into the wood and the scene of his strange experience was lost to view.

CHAPTER XIV

GEROLD MEETS WITH A SURPRISE

Gerold arrived at Hall about noon. He made up his mind to remain in the city that night and part of the following day in order to visit the various places of interest. It had been his habit during his travels to stop a while, wherever he could, in the hope of securing a fund of useful information.

He went to the Black Bear Inn where he had first met Gatterer and was greeted cordially by the landlord who had not forgotten him. Somewhat surprised at seeing the pack on his shoulders the landlord sought to learn why he had left the foundry. Gerold would give no explanation except that he wished to visit his mother. A sense of caution led him to take this course as he did not

know what Gatterer's relations might be with the landlord.

The highway robbery was made a subject of conversation though Gerold would have gladly avoided it.

"It makes my blood run cold," exclaimed the landlord, when Gerold had told all he knew and shivered at recalling his experience.

"Such another crime was committed about eighteen years ago," volunteered the landlord. "Not far from the foundry an awful crime was committed. At that time Gatterer's father was alive but the son managed the business. I remember, as if it only happened yesterday, what a profound sensation it created. The victims were an Italian merchant, his wife and the escort. When the bodies were discovered a girl child was found by a peasant under a tree, not far from the spot where her parents had been murdered. The peasant took the child home intending to raise it in his family but the old couple

were too poor and finally gave it to Gatterer's young wife, who brought it up with her son who is now a Franciscan father."

"Do you refer to Elizabeth?" anxiously and almost breathlessly inquired Gerold.

"Yes, it is she to whom I refer," replied the landlord pleased with the surprise he had aroused.

Gerold gazed fixedly into the landlord's face for some minutes.

"You don't tell me whether you believe me or not," cried the latter.

"It is hard for me to believe you," replied Gerold. "Does the girl know nothing of her parentage?"

"Absolutely nothing," returned the landlord.

"But, her relatives and friends in Italy —"

"They didn't trouble themselves about the girl. Why, you may easily guess. Probably on account of the inheritance for if the father were rich, as it is said he was, the

other relatives would get possession of his wealth and would not be anxious to be disinherited by the rightful heir. Hence no inquiries were made concerning her."

"Yes, I understand that," assented Gerold, as he finished his measure of wine. He told the landlord to take care of his pack till he returned and left the tavern.

Gerold walked through the streets lost in thought. Finally he asked a citizen the way to Philipppo's.

"Near by," was the answer. "Turn the corner of the next street till you come to the church; there you will see a three-story house with a gable and narrow balconies — that is Philipppo's."

Gerold returned thanks and continued his walk. In a little while he was in front of the jewelry shop and entered without hesitation.

"What can I do for you, sir?" inquired Philipppo of the stranger whom he now saw for the first time. The latter told his name

and then continued: "I am from the foundry where I have been at work for some time. Was not Mr. Gatterer here a short while since —?"

"Yes."

"And he brought a gold chain?"

"That is correct."

"I have heard it said that the chain was very beautiful. Would you do me the kindness to let me look at it?"

"With pleasure," replied Philippo as he took out the chain. Gerold ventured to take it in his hand so as to examine it closely. Unconsciously he exclaimed:

"Exactly the same! exactly the same!" The jeweler was astonished and inquired what he meant, but Gerold gave no answer. Scarcely had Philippo asked the question when the door opened and — Gatterer's herculean form appeared before them. He looked at the goldsmith, at Gerold and at the chain which the latter was examining and his eyes flashed fire. He seemed excited by

the presence of his former workman and his first words indicated it.

“What have you to do with that chain?” he roared at Gerold in a rough, sharp voice as he snatched the object from his hand. The visitor was dumbfounded and could not utter a word. Philippo also regarded Gatterer’s visit as strange and did not hesitate to go to Gerold’s rescue.

“He only wanted to look at the chain which he heard praised so highly in your house,” he explained. “I saw nothing wrong in gratifying him.”

“But I,” blustered Gatterer, wrought up to a high pitch, “object seriously. How do you know what his secret intentions are? And that you may understand that I have special reasons for my question, I desire to ask how he left my house with a ring belonging to me. Now, Roemer, can you answer my question?”

Gerold stood in front of him, dumb with amazement and indignation, the blood rush-

ing to his cheeks. He struggled with all his might to compose himself.

“Mr. Gatterer,” he finally said slowly, “what you say is to accuse me of theft. I do not really understand your conduct. Yes, this ring on my finger I brought with me from your house —” he showed Gatterer the ring — “your daughter made me a present of it, and your wife was present and gave her approval.”

“Neither my wife nor daughter has any right to make presents of what belong to me,” said Gatterer sharply. “The ring is my property and I want it returned; do you understand, or will I appeal to the authorities?”

Gatterer acted like a crazy man. It seemed to Philipppo that the man he had known so well for years had suddenly gone insane, and this thought was shared by Gerold. The latter did not know that Gatterer had concealed himself in an adjoining room and through the thin partitions had heard

what passed between him and the women. After his departure Gatterer asked for the ring, and on hearing how it had been disposed of, made a great fuss and rushed to the city to drag Gerold back and make him surrender the ring. On arriving at Hall he looked everywhere for the workmen, and after learning that he had taken lodging at the "Black Bear," traced him to Philippo's.

Notwithstanding Gatterer's threats, Gerold refused to surrender the ring, and Philippo had the manly courage to sustain him in the stand he had taken.

"So you want to help this fellow!" Gatterer shouted at Philippo, greatly incensed. "Then listen: Hereafter we are strangers to each other. You need not make the chain for which I gave the order. As for you," turning to Gerold, "I know how to compel you to surrender the ring."

He stumbled from the shop in a fury.

"I have often heard that Gatterer was a coarse, passionate man," said the jeweler,

indignant beyond measure, "but I did not think it was so bad; that is the ferocity of a wicked man. Have no fear, good man. Gatterer will neither deprive you of the ring nor anything else. Return quietly to your lodgings and wait for me; I will be with you in a little while."

Gerold returned to the Black Bear, as he had been told.

CHAPTER XV

THE MYSTERY OF THE FOUNDRY

Alexander Philippo was a man of his word. Gerold had not been quite half an hour in his lodgings when the jeweler appeared. He found the young man greatly agitated. Gatterer had worried him by his violent deportment and by his threats to appeal to the authorities to secure possession of the ring.

Philippo was greatly embittered against Gatterer, notwithstanding their long and intimate acquaintance, not only because of his rudeness, but especially because of his cancellation of the order for the chain. This feeling he did not attempt to conceal from Gerold as they sat at a table engaged in a low conversation.

Gerold made no comment. He seemed

perplexed about something, and finally said: "By your leave, Mr. Philippo, it seems very singular that Gatterer should give you such an order."

"Why?" inquired Philippo. "He wanted to make his wife a present on her birthday and gave me the chain as a model by which to make another for that purpose. I see nothing singular in that."

"But I do," answered Gerold, embarrassed. "I do not venture to tell all. I —" He stopped and cast a searching look around the room. No one, not even the landlord, was present.

Philippo's curiosity had been aroused. "Do you know anything in particular?" he inquired.

"I know that Gatterer has another chain exactly the same as that he gave you. That I know from his daughter. I know, too, that at the time of the murder and robbery the daughter of the Italian marquis lost a chain just like the one he gave you as a

model. And now tell me where does this second chain come from, and why does Gatterer want a third one made? He may make a present of the second chain and then say he had it made by you. Don't you think that all this is very dark and mysterious, and — ? ”

“ Young man,” replied Philipppo, “ do you know what you are saying? No — no — You don't know. Gatter has a second chain exactly like the other? ”

“ Yes, yes, without a doubt,” asserted Gerold positively, so that his manner carried conviction to the mind of the jeweler. “ I did not know anything about it, sir ; it was Elizabeth who told me, and she couldn't lie if she tried.”

The jeweler rose from his seat. “ Gerold Roemer, I want you to accompany me,” he said in an earnest tone. “ Your statement is too serious to go unnoticed. Are you ready to repeat to the mayor what you have told to me? ”

“Yes, I am,” answered Gerold, “but —” he stopped.

“What is the matter?” inquired Philippo.

“You will not injure Gatterer?” said Gerold, who seemed to have repented having said too much. “I do not want that, sir.”

“It makes no difference to me,” replied the jeweler. “I am a member of the city council and know that Gatterer obtained the chain from the mayor and has evidently appropriated it. That is a crime. Besides, there is —” The entrance of the landlord obliged him to change the subject and, not to arouse suspicion or create surprise, he said in a friendly tone: “You will not let me go alone, my friend?” accompanying the question with a look that left Gerold no option but to accompany him.

Both went to the office of the mayor, where Gerold was obliged not only to repeat what he had told Philippo, but to relate all his experience at the foundry.

The mayor then told Gerold to return to his lodgings and remain there till he was called for. He was pained by the announcement that he could not think of leaving the city for a day or two, and then realized what a serious difficulty he had fallen into.

“Gatterer will not be imprisoned?” came tremblingly from his lips. “Have mercy on him, I beg you —”

“Young man, let us take care of that,” answered the mayor.

Gerold left the office in a dazed condition. He was racked by a terrible anxiety.

Gatterer, in the meantime, had gone to the Franciscan monastery, where he informed the prior that Camilla should leave in a day or two, and inquired if Father Adalbert were ready.

A look of pity was depicted on the prior's face. “I am sorry,” he said, “but I dare not send your son on the journey. I fear the fatigue would kill him. Yesterday and to-day his condition has not been the best,

though he is not in bed. Any excitement may be prejudicial, and I think it better to postpone his trip till his health is somewhat improved."

Gatterer was not pleased with the news of his son's sickness. He was anxious to get rid of Camilla, whose presence was leading to dangerous complications. He left the monastery in a discontented mood. Everything seemed to conspire against him to-day. He felt his courage failing, and those whom he passed in the street could see anger in his face. He went to the council chamber, where a painful surprise awaited him. The jeweler stood before him and observed him closely. Not a word was said by either, although they had previously been friends. He attempted to explain his presence to the mayor, but Harracher cut him short with the cold remark that he already knew what he wanted. "Mr. Philippo has already told me," he said. "Besides, you are wanted here. I must ask you, Mr. Gatterer, to re-

turn the chain you have in your possession; it is not yours."

The mayor spoke with severity, and Gatterer colored, but quickly recovered his composure.

"What am I to understand by your remark?" he inquired in an unruffled voice. "I do not know what you mean, Mr. Mayor."

"Then I must inform you," replied Harracher, "that you are under arrest."

An officer entered by a side door, accompanied by armed men.

Gatterer gave them a fierce look. A dreadful struggle was going on in his breast—should he put forth all his strength to secure his freedom? Finally he turned to Harracher and said:

"Mr. Mayor, I am innocent. Take care you do not suffer for this outrage to an honorable man;" then to the officer: "I am ready, lead the way."

Great was the excitement in the streets as Gatterer was led to prison, for no one

could imagine what had befallen the honored citizen.

At the foundry no one dreamed of such an occurrence. The wife was afflicted because of the threats made against Gerold, but still more because of the change she had noticed in her husband, who of late had become severe and harsh in his manner towards her. Though he had never been of a gentle disposition, she asked herself for an explanation, but could find none either in her own conduct or in the condition of the business, which was as prosperous as could be desired.

While thus engaged with her thoughts Ursula rushed into the room. "Madam!" she cried in great agitation, "a band of armed men are coming to the house. Can they be robbers and murderers —"

"Jesus, save us!" she exclaimed, frightened out of her senses. "Those are officers from the city. What can they want here?"

The next moment the officers of the law

were in the room. "Mrs. Gatterer," said the chief, in a sympathetic but firm tone, "it is my duty to tell you that your husband has been imprisoned and I am instructed to arrest every man I can find in the foundry."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the wife. "What has happened?" And she fell to the floor in a swoon. Ursula screamed and Elizabeth and Camilla came running in.

In the foundry workshops a different scene was presented. Hans was the first to notice the approach of the officers, but before he could call to the others for help he was surrounded and put in irons. His shrieks and curses attracted the others to the spot.

"Stand together," yelled Hans, "and never surrender!" But in a few minutes all were made prisoners and escorted to Hall, through whose crowded streets they were conducted to the prison.

Great was the consternation and dismay of the populace when it became rumored that

Gatterer's foundry was a robbers' den. But greater still was the dismay which prevailed in Gatterer's home. The house resounded with moans and groans and weeping and lamentations. Suddenly, like a lightning flash, Camilla uttered a terrible scream and rushed from the house to the woods, where she was afterwards found, almost insane with terror, by Gerold and others.

"Save me from them!" she screamed, rushing towards her former friend. "They want to kill me, as they already killed my father and mother."

She fell unconscious to the ground and was carried by Gerold and others back to the foundry, where, with the aid of Elizabeth and her mother, she soon recovered her senses.

Harracher, who, accompanied by Philipppo and others, had been guided by Gerold, informed Mrs. Gatterer that he would have to search the premises. Her husband was under grave suspicion, but it was hoped that

the search would reveal no incriminating evidence.

The walls, floors and ceilings were examined and sounded. The cellar was visited and light was thrown on every spot, but without result. As the party was about to leave, thankful that no evidence of Gatterer's guilt had been discovered, Philippo suddenly exclaimed: "What is that?"

He had stamped his foot on a spot in the centre which sounded hollow. Tools were brought, and beneath a trap-door, covered with earth, a heavy iron chest was found, which was broken open with difficulty. It contained a variety of articles — gold and silver ornaments, costly clothing, and heaps of gold coin. Almost on top glittered a gold chain for which Philippo reached.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "this is the chain of which the workman spoke," and he looked at Gerold. "It is just like the other and must have been made by Philippo in Rome."

Soldiers were left to watch over the plunder, and Harracher told Gerold to remain with the women till more help could come from the city.

In the prison a frightful change had also taken place. Scarcely had the news of his father's arrest reached Father Adalbert in the Franciscan monastery when the son started for the prison. He did not believe his father guilty. There must be a great mistake.

"Father! father!" he cried, as he entered the prison, "what has happened?"

Gatterer, sitting on a bench, looked straight ahead and did not utter a word.

"Father!" again cried the monk, as he bent to take hold of the prisoner's hand; but, as if touched with a red hot iron, the father drew back. Suddenly he jumped to his feet and cried in great excitement: "Adalbert! Adalbert! Away from me! Away! Do not touch me! I am — I am — a murderer, a cursed monster! Leave me —

alone. I dare not look on you again. I can never look in your face. Away, Adalbert, away!"

"It is not possible, father, I will not believe it," answered the son. "Your sudden imprisonment has affected your brain."

The jailer appeared and instructed Gatterer to follow him. The latter rose to his feet, his face pallid and looking ten years older—his expression indicated the condition of his conscience and the remorse which there lay hid.

Harracher sat at a table in the justice hall. On the table were two golden chains, exactly alike. When he saw these Gatterer winced.

"Gatterer," said Harracher, "there are heavy charges against you. We have uncovered in your house things that will be your ruin."

Gatterer, with sunken head, had listened in silence. Then, casting a hasty glance at his judges, he said: "Yes, I am guilty. I

acknowledge it. I and my workmen have led robbers' lives during eighteen years. No one suspected it—not even my wife and daughter. Both are innocent, but you may execute me; I am deserving of death.”

The judges were seized with consternation. Gatterer had pronounced his own sentence. He was led back to prison and preparations were made at once for an official trial. The family and the chest containing the stolen treasures were brought to the city. When the box was being emptied a small picture was discovered resembling Elizabeth. It had been taken from the locket of which Gatterer had robbed the wife of the Italian merchant eighteen years before.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXECUTION OF THE ROBBERS

Another important point needed elucidation. How did it happen that Camilla possessed a chain and locket similar to that of Elizabeth? The judges were of the opinion that the young girls might be relatives. The judicial investigation threw no light upon the subject, and it was therefore determined to appeal to the Roman authorities for further information. This would take some weeks and would delay Gatterer's trial and execution.

Camilla was anxious to return to her native land. Under no circumstances would she return to the foundry to live, so she made her home with the family of Alexander Philipppo.

When she had made the necessary prep-

arations, the city provided horses and an escort, and one bright morning she rolled out of the city in the same heavy coach that had brought the family from Rome. Gerold, who, because he understood Italian, had been so serviceable to Camilla, was among those who formed her escort, but Father Adalbert remained in his monastery, busied with his sad thoughts.

When the coach reached the forks of the road the driver pulled up his horses. Two women robed in mourning were waiting for the travelers — they were Mrs. Gatterer and Elizabeth. A bitterly painful and sorrowful explanation followed.

“Come with me,” said Camilla to the latter, but Elizabeth shook her head and, through Gerold, explained that it was her duty to remain with Mrs. Gatterer, who had been a second mother to her. Gatterer’s wife fell upon her knees beside the coach door, and with uplifted hands piteously besought Camilla to forgive her erring hus-

band. A short, fierce struggle took place in Camilla's breast. Finally the longed-for words fell from her lips — words of Christian forgiveness. The tears of parting flowed and the coach rolled onward, while the two dark-robed mourners returned to their desolate home at the foundry.

Three days later Gerold appeared at Gatterer's former dwelling. He gave Elizabeth a package which Camilla had forgotten to deliver before leaving. It contained a number of valuable ornaments. Gerold turned away from the place the second time; his journey with Camilla had revived his longing to visit his home and mother.

"But I will return, Elizabeth," he said, "if you tell me sincerely that I will be welcome."

"Indeed, you will, Gerold," she replied, blushing.

"Yes, come back soon, Gerold," added Mrs. Gatterer. "You are very dear to Elizabeth and she will soon need some one to

care for and protect her, for I will not live long."

Gerold left his lodgings in the city the same day and journeyed to his home in Bavaria, where, greatly to his relief, he found his old mother hale and hearty and delighted to see her son once more.

Weeks rolled by. Gatterer and his associates were still in prison awaiting the sentence which would put an end to their lives. Gatterer was the first to be summoned before the tribunal. He heard his death sentence with firmness and resignation. "May I ask one favor?" he inquired, after the sentence. Being told to explain, he continued: "The parish of Mils is poor. It needs a new bell. Give me leave to cast one for it before my execution."

His request was forwarded to Innsbruck to the supreme court and was granted. He returned to his foundry in chains and, guarded by armed officers of the law. With the help of some blacksmiths from Hall the

bell was cast and Gatterer returned to his prison cell to prepare for his doom.

It was Friday, the last for Gatterer on earth. In the early morning he was led out of the city to the hill in the vicinity of his former home and not far from the scene of his awful misdeeds. By his side walked Father Adalbert, whispering words of comfort and hope.

At the foundry he bade good-bye to his unfortunate wife and Elizabeth, from whom he asked forgiveness. He did the same with his son, who with trembling hand lifted the crucifix to his lips. The condemned man then knelt, and suddenly the brazen voice of the last bell he had cast came floating from the church tower of Mils — the first and last greeting of the bell to its maker.

At the same moment the sword of the executioner flashed — human justice had been satisfied.

A few days afterwards the death sentence was pronounced upon the others, only two

escaping with sentences of life imprisonment.

In two weeks word came from Rome that Camilla's and Elizabeth's mothers had been friends in their youth. Elizabeth's real name was Eulalia Bianca Catani, and at her baptism the Marquis Mazzini had been her godfather. When Elizabeth and her parents traveled to Germany, Camilla's mother had two chains made, one of which she gave as a present to her companion, and with it a locket containing a portrait of Elizabeth, whose features resembled those of Camilla in general outline.

With the official communication a letter also arrived from Camilla announcing that she had entered a convent in Rome and had donated some of her wealth to Gerold and Elizabeth, on condition that they would be united in marriage — a condition which gave rise to no difficulty, as such a union had been previously agreed upon.

Gerold and his wife went to live with his

mother soon after, and he established a foundry of his own, and success and prosperity were the reward of his industry and honesty.

Mrs. Gatterer, at their earnest request, accompanied them to their home, but died a few months later of a broken heart, after hearing that her son, Father Adalbert, had been laid to rest in the Franciscan churchyard.

The foundry is still in existence, occupied by a peaceful peasant family, who tell its history to the traveler and point to a stone slab on which is engraved an epitome of Gatterer's career, in proof of the authenticity of the story here presented to the reader.

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